

**SPECTRAL IMAGES:  
“DISPOSSESSED FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS”  
CIRCULATING IN ANTIQUE MARKETS IN TURKEY**

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MASTER OF FINE ARTS

By

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May, 2005

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## ABSTRACT

### SPECTRAL IMAGES: “DISPOSSESSED FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS” CIRCULATING IN ANTIQUE MARKETS IN TURKEY

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This study is an attempt to make sense of family photographs that are circulating in antique markets in Turkey. The phenomenon of “dispossessed family photographs” is examined on the basis of the critical literature on photography mainly by Walter Benjamin and Roland Barthes. Depending on this theoretical framework, this study examines the discourse of antique sellers/collectors about “dispossessed family photographs” and the field that these photographs are circulating in. The discourse of antique sellers/collectors suggests that, “dispossessed photographs” have an elusive quality both in the minds of people and in the antique domain.

**Keywords:** Family photographs, antique markets, “collecting”, “aura”.

## ÖZET

### HAYALET İMGELER: TÜRKİYEDE ANTİKA PAZARLARINDA DOLAŞIMDA OLAN “SAHİPSİZ AİLE FOTOĞRAFLARI”

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Bu çalışma Türkiyedeki antika pazarlarında dolaşımda olan aile fotoğraflarını anlamlandırma çabasıdır. “Sahipsiz aile fotoğrafları” fenomeni, fotoğraf üzerine olan eleştirel kurama ve özellikle Walter Benjamin ve Roland Barthes’a dayanarak incelenmiştir. Bu teorik çerçeveye dayanan çalışma, antika satıcılarının / koleksiyoncularının “sahipsiz aile fotoğrafları” hakkındaki söylemlerini ve bu fotoğrafların dolaşımda olduğu alanı inceler. Antika satıcılarının / koleksiyoncularının söylemleri, “sahipsiz aile fotoğraflarının” hem insanların zihinlerinde hem de antika çevresinde tarifi zor bir yere sahip olduğunu öne sürer.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Aile fotoğrafları, antika pazarları, “koleksiyonculuk”, “aura”.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In antique markets in Turkey, besides traditional items that are used to be seen (i.e.; antiques furniture, porcelain, glass and silver ware etc.) one can also find old photographs. These photographs might date back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century or might have been taken in recent years. They may depict a personal moment or a public event. No matter what they are, they have a peculiar place among antiques. Unlike other vintage items, one can not easily know where to find such photographs in the antique market because they do not form a category in themselves. There are not specific places where only old photographs are being sold. They do not fit into any main category of antiques. There is not a typical or established way of selling photographs in the market. That is why many antique shops coming from different areas of interest may sell old photographs in different contexts, in various ways and for diverse reasons. In culture of collecting, therefore, these photographs have a different and complex status. One can encounter an old photograph in an antique furniture seller's shop that is fixed in the corner of a mirror, or such a photograph might be found along with posters in a counter of a flea market. They may be stored in shoe boxes, albums, shop windows etc. They can be everywhere in every antique shop but at the same time no where. In most of antique shops their presence is arbitrary. They have a presence in the antique domain but it escapes easy definition since, there is not a specific place they fit in.

This study takes as its object this vaguely defined cultural phenomenon which I will call “dispossessed family photographs”. What I mean by this term is family photographs with an untraceable past. I should admit that this is a challenging topic in the sense that there is not a specific, definite frame that allows one to read these photographs and build a narration around them. My object of study is actually not a concrete, tangible material. The empty space between photographs glued in the album is my arena of discussion. The nonexistence of owners or evidences is what I am dealing with. By reading absences I will try to describe meanings clustered around untraceable visual memories that “dispossessed family photographs” present. I will try to define the antique domain they are existing in and the way these subtle objects are used, understood and perceived in this sphere by sellers and collectors.

### **1.1 Scope of the Study**

This thesis’s object of study then is an elusive material. It is hard to define, make sense of, and even name photographs that are circulating in antique markets. There are several kinds of personal photographs that one can encounter with when wandering in a flea-market or an antique store. There are old photographs in different shapes, sizes and in various conditions. They come from diverse cities and counties and belong to different time periods and social contexts. The only common point these photographs share is the fact that their past is untraceable. One can not track human figures in photographs, who they are, when they used to live or if they are still living. However, one thing is sure that these photographs were once kept by a family and now they have lost their connections with them. These photographs do not belong to subjects depicted in them anymore. After having been lost and got apart from their holders and their “original” context, these

photographs turn into commodities circulating in antique markets. Because of this common point they share, these anonymous photographs will be called in this thesis “dispossessed family photographs”.



**Figure 1.** An example of a “dispossessed family photograph” circulated in antique markets of Turkey. Purchased from a second- hand book store in Kadıköy District, Istanbul

Using the term “dispossession”, I am indicating that these photographs are no longer kept by subjects in the photograph or their family members. It is important to note that, by using the phrase “dispossessed photographs” I do not mean to suggest that photographs can ever be possessed. An image can not possibly be possessed by the

subject. By definition, all photographs are indeed always already dispossessed in themselves. The term “dispossessed photographs” is certainly an oxymoron in the sense that it conjoins contradictory terms. Also, one can not suggest that the image and subjects depicted in it can coincide. Analyzing the photographic ritual and the moment of posing Roland Barthes writes:

what I want, in short, is that my (mobile) image, buffeted among a thousand shifting photographs, altering with situation and age, should always coincide with my (profound) “self”; but it is the contrary that must be said: “myself” never coincides with my image; for it is the image which is heavy, motionless, stubborn (which is why society sustains it), and “myself” which is light, divided, dispersed; like a bottle-imp, “myself” doesn’t hold still, giggling in my jar: if only Photography could give me a neutral, anatomic body, a body which signifies nothing! (12)

Photograph in itself can not capture identity and the image can not be possessed. Hence I use the term “dispossessed” only to indicate photographs’ displaced status. The choice of this term is meant to emphasize the ambiguous state of these photographs which create a categorical confusion.

In this context, I would also like to emphasize the “spectral quality” of “dispossessed family photographs” circulating in antique markets. Originating from the Latin word “spectrum”, the expression “specter” has two interrelated meanings: (1) “a visible ghost;

an apparition” (2) “a haunting fear; the treat of something unpleasant”.<sup>1</sup> The first meaning of the word specter evokes the indefinite, untraceable and hard to frame quality of “dispossessed photographs”. I use the term “specter” to refer to mysterious ghost-like presence in the market of “dispossessed family photographs”. Also the term “specter” invokes the physical state of family photographs in the sense that they fade and get pale.

The second meaning of the word “specter” as “a haunting fear; the treat of something unpleasant” discloses the sense of irritation that these photographs might create. They carry untraceable pasts with them which might sometimes create an uncanny felling for the members of the antique market. More to the point, the word “specter” also defines the way I approach to my object of study. As I mentioned above, what I am studying is an intangible material. I will read gaps and absences in the domain that these “dispossessed family photographs” survive. Because of all these reasons the concept of “spectral image” is used in this thesis to describe these photographs’ indeterminable quality.

## **1.2 Literature Review**

Drawing upon the critical literature on photography, I will try to assess cultural meanings clustered around “dispossessed family photographs” circulating in the antique market as commodities. There is a broad critical literature on photography. While exploring “dispossessed family photographs”, I will draw upon writings of Susan Sontag, Kaja Silverman, Annette Kuhn and Geoffrey Batchen. Apart from this literature,

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<sup>1</sup> Allen, Robert. *Chambers encyclopedic English dictionary*, Edinburgh: Chambers, 1994

I will examine Walter Benjamin's writings on photography and Roland Barthes last book *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* as my primary theoretical sources.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century has seen an expansion in the realm of visibility. We can see the invention of the camera is a continuation of the process of expansion in visual experiences. As a technology of visual communication invented in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, photography has always had a peculiar place among other visual technologies. The peculiarity of photography arises from the fact that it has been tightly integrated into everyday life culture and practiced by ordinary people from the very outset. The invention of the first photographic method in 1839, the "daguerreotype", was rapidly absorbed and assimilated by a society that was already eager to accept such an invention. Especially after the 1900s, it is hard to think of any other leisure activity that could have magnetized such a broad range of social and economic groups. Being such a commonly experienced practice in society, later developments in the technology of photography gave rise to corresponding transformations in visual culture and everyday life practices.

In recent years, photographic techniques have undergone an immense technological transformation and an unprecedented expansion especially after the introduction of digital technologies since the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As a result of the introduction of these technologies, there has been a radical change in our understanding and experience of photography. Day by day, the conventional film based photographs are replaced by computer based digital photographs along with a change in the production, circulation and consumption of images. The transformation that image



technologies undergo not only affects the nature of the image, but also cultural forms, contexts and practices in and through which photographs are consumed.

The invention of photography was a milestone in society's visual tradition and was primarily discussed by Walter Benjamin in his 1936 essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction". Benjamin in this essay discusses new forms of producing art and its consequences for the capitalist industry of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In order to explain the effect of new cultural / technological developments, Benjamin introduces a complex concept called "aura". He discusses art at two levels; the "auratic" level of art that is based on rituals and originality, and the art that is "technologically affected". The main thesis of Benjamin in this essay is the future decay of the "aura" and the authenticity of artworks by mechanical mass reproduction in an age of rapid technological developments. In the light of recent developments in digital recording technology in photography, Benjamin's essay and his concept "aura" is coming to be re-assessed by scholars of cultural theory. Predictions made by Benjamin in the 1930s are re-evaluated and re-read. The main question in these debates is whether a second revolution is happening in visual culture with the transition to digital reproduction in photography. If yes, what is happening to "aura"? When a reassessment of Benjamin's argument in the context of the recent technological and social developments is made, several scholars argue that mechanical photography begins to re-gain an "auratic" value in contrast to Benjamin's view. For example Dirk Baecker suggests that "aura" is not disappearing like the way Benjamin suggested. In contrast, there is almost an inevitable reappearance of "aura" as a result of technological developments (9). Similarly, Andreas Huyssen suggests that "today, digitization makes the 'original' photograph auratic" (20).

So the question becomes: can photography, although mechanically reproduced, be said to preserve an “auratic” value in our contemporary era when compared to digital photographs? When these reassessments on the changing nature of photography in relation to today’s technological developments are made, it can be suggested that mechanical photography begins to re-gain an “auratic” value. The question that I am interested in is how we can make sense of “dispossessed family photographs” in this context. What can we say about their “auratic” value? This thesis aims to show that mechanically produced photographs might have indeed an “aura”. This suggestion can most clearly be observed in the case of “dispossessed family photographs” circulating across antique markets.

### **1.3 Methodology**

The first part of this study is mostly based on literature review. In the second part, some qualitative research techniques will be utilized to disclose meanings clustered around “dispossessed family photographs” circulating in antique markets in Turkey. I use interviewing and observation as my key research techniques. Primarily, data are gathered from in-depth interviews conducted with antique shop owners and collectors from Ankara and Istanbul. I conducted total twelve interviews. All of the interviews were conducted live and face to face in the antique market generally in the seller’s store. Four interviews were made in Istanbul; the rest was conducted in Ankara. Four of the participants are photograph collectors and at the same time sellers; four of them have antique collections on different subjects, and the rest is only sellers. Interviews were conducted in December 2004.

As to the selection of people interviewed, random sampling was used. Interviewees were chosen among antique sellers / collectors who sell and/or collect photographs. In order to reach these people, snowball sampling strategy is consulted. Snowball sampling is the method that is used “to discover the members of a group of individuals not otherwise easily identified by starting with someone in the know and asking for referrals to other knowledgeable individuals” (Kathwohl 173). This method is suitable for my research, since this study is interested in a specialized area of collecting. References were asked from the interviewee at the end of each interview.

In this process of interviewing, partially structured interview method was used.

Questions were open-ended. Each interview begins with specific questions prepared beforehand like “where do you find these photographs?”, “who are buyers of such intimate items”, “how do you name and describe these photographs” etc. The order of questions was different in each interview because what to ask next was determined by the flow of the interview. Questions were prepared to have an in-depth understanding of the logic of the antique markets, the circulation system in the market, and the people’s experiences with “dispossessed family photographs”. Many interviews moved into discussions of additional topics introduced by the interviewees. Interviews were audio tape recorded and then transcribed.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to interviews, this thesis also draws upon my personal experiences and observations. For the thesis, I have visited several antique shops, second hand book

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A for a sample interview in local language. See Appendix B for its English translation.

shops, flea markets in Ankara and Istanbul, and attended live and online auctions. I have not made formal recorded interviews in all the domains that I have visited, but had a chance to observe members of the domain. In this way, I have made informal participant observation and taken field notes. Also, when possible I have taken photographs in the field where interviews have been conducted. Photographs as “non-text-based documents” helped me to get access to details that are difficult to verbalize (Mason 71). Observations, notes and photographs that I have taken during my visits to the field helped me in producing transcripts of the interviews as well as also in analyzing and interpreting them.

#### **1.4 Chapters in Brief**

My discussion on “dispossessed family photographs” starts with a brief summary on history of photograph technologies. This second chapter called “a brief history of photography” aims to provide a review of the changing apprehension of photography in social life in history.

The following chapter is devoted to my theoretical framework of the critical literature on photography. The two critics that I will focus on in this chapter are Walter Benjamin and Roland Barthes. First, I present a review of Walter Benjamin’s account on photography. Concentration is given especially to his concept of “aura”. Secondly, this chapter discusses Barthes’ *Camera Lucida: Reflection on Photography*.

Chapter Four is entitled “dispossessed family photographs in the domain of Turkish antique market”. This chapter has two main parts. In the first part, “mapping antique

markets in Turkey”, the circulation system of “dispossessed photographs” in the antique markets of Turkey is defined. After being abandoned, family photographs resurface in junk stores, flea markets, secondhand book stores and antique shops. But how does this happen? Why does a family photograph end up in garbage? How come are they gathered from the trash and by whom? What makes these personal photographs valuable enough to be gathered from the trash by strangers? This chapter seeks to map out the antique domain through the journey of photographs from personal sphere to public domain. “Dispossessed family photographs” are valued by collecting culture in the antique market. After having been survived from the trash, they began to have a life of their own in the antique market. They begin to circulate between sellers and collector. This chapter will examine this circulation system and the arbitrators in it. In order to present an overview of the established collecting system, each arbitrator in the system is examined. Mapping the antique domain, this chapter reveals that there is a complicated, dispersed but systematic circulation/collection system established for “dispossessed family photographs”.

The second part of chapter four is entitled “from the perspective of sellers and collectors: dispossessed family photographs as spectral images”. This part foremost offers an overview of the established categorization system of “dispossessed family photographs” in the antique market. I will analyze how “dispossessed family photographs” gain a new meaning and value in the public domain. This chapter shows, how personal family photographs, are put on sale in a legitimized way by established categorization systems.

In the following discussion in chapter four, an examination on “dispossessed family photographs” is offered on the basis of the interviews with members of the antique market. How is the meaning of an anonymous family photograph constructed in the discourse of antique sellers and collectors? In this section I will also seek to examine “dispossessed family photographs” in the light of the theories of Benjamin and Barthes. The discourse of antique sellers and collectors will be discussed in detail in subsections entitled “the sense of melancholy” and “the sense of uneasiness”.

## 2. A BRIEF HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Before the invention of photography in the 19th century there were cameras that captured light and produced a focused image like the camera-obscura. However, no device was able to record an image. In 1816 Joseph Nicéphore Niépce combined the idea of camera obscura with photosensitive paper and later produced the first photographic image in 1827. After his death, the major contribution to fixing an image on a surface was made by his partner Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre in 1839 in France. Through the invention of the daguerreotype, for the first time one was able to have a fixed clear and sharp image on silver plated copper. The invention was greeted with enormous interest by society as it responded to the demand for portraiture that oil painting could not meet. Producing a self-image in such a realistic and detailed way was warmly greeted by the rich. The daguerreotype was an expensive invention (25 gold francs at that time) therefore, “they were not infrequently kept in a case, like jewellery” (Benjamin “Small History”). At the same time in England another method called the calotype was invented by William Henry Fox Talbot and patented in 1841. Unlike Daguerre’s expensive method which did not satisfy the need for a means of copying, Talbot used paper and his method provided multiple copies of an image. However, since the image was less sharp than Daguerre’s process, the method was much less popular outside England. “The first cameras, made in France and England in the early 1840s, had

only inventors and buff to operate them (...) Taking photographs had no social use; it was a gratuitous, that is an artistic activity through with few pretensions to being an art” (Sontag 8). The next invention made by Frederic Scott Archer in 1851 Collodian process overcame the fuzziness of calotypes and still allowed the production of multiple copies in a cheap way. In 1854 Adolphe Disderi developed carte-de-visite (visiting card) photography in Paris which led to a worldwide increase in portrait studios.

As the number of photographers increased throughout the 1840s, the cost of daguerreotypes diminished and with the introduction of less costly procedures, like the ambrotype, the tintype, and the carte-de-visite in the 1860s, photographic portraiture became affordable for all members of society. Unlike the critical understanding of photography as construction, in early photographic discourse, photography was believed to offer an innocent objective way of seeing. Society’s quick acceptance of the new ‘innocent’ technology created new ways of seeing and perceiving the world. Through the introduction of photography, the quality of remembrance was changed. Dating back to 1859, the American writer Oliver Wendell Holmes described photography as “the mirror with a memory” (qtd. in Batchen “Forget Me Not”). At that time, a portrait photograph was a valuable memorable occasion. The resulting photograph had a special importance for the owner as it was an expression of identity. Beside cased images, collecting photographs in albums started to gain popularity. By the 1870s the usage of gelatin instead of glass or paper led to the dry plate process that marked another important turning point in the history of photography. In this way, pictures could be taken by ordinary people in everyday life. In 1884, George Eastman introduced flexible film and later in 1888 he patented the box camera known as the Kodak roll-film camera.



This new invention was promoted with the slogan “you push the button, we do the rest” (Lewis and Harding 7). After 1900, with the introduction of cheap, easy-to-use cameras and a developing lab service that would do the processing, photography became accessible to everyone. After the introduction of the camera to the domain of ordinary families, taking photographs became a means of recording relationships and social rituals and an important means of self representation. Albums became a necessary confirmation of the family unit and were proudly displayed to children and relatives (Batchen “Each Wild Idea” 68). Prior to that time, all photographs had been taken by professional photographers. However, after 1901, when photography became available to the mass-market, every aspect of everyday life could be a subject for amateur photographers. The studio photography tradition lost its value in the twentieth century with the introduction of portable cameras. Other important developments in the process of photography’s integration into everyday life practices were the invention of color film and instant photography. With the invention of the self-processing camera by Edwin H. Land, going to the lab for processing became unnecessary. Land introduced the Polaroid camera in 1948 and it reduced development time to about fifteen seconds. With disposable/ single-use cameras introduced by Fuji in 1986, taking photographs became easy anytime and anywhere. In subsequent years, the degree of automation of cameras has gradually increased and functions of film loading, rewinding, focusing, and selecting the correct exposure have all become automated. All these developments have made the practice of taking photographs so much an inseparable part of the daily life that “having an experience becomes identical with taking a photograph of it, and participating in a public event comes more and more to be equivalent to looking at it in photographed form” (Sontag 24). The genre of travel photo albums that was popular in the mid-1900s

can be given as an example. Travel photos which are mostly taken in front of important city sights like monuments are seen as a proof of the ideal holiday experienced by the subjects in the photo. The camera is included not only on holidays but also at every important event that society celebrates and reinforces such as weddings, birthday parties and graduations. “Memorializing the achievements of individuals considered as members of families (as well as of other groups) is the earliest popular use of photography. For at least a century, the wedding photograph has been as much a part of the ceremony as the prescribed verbal formulas. Cameras go with the family life” (Sontag 8). Photography has become a social rite.

Digital photo images were introduced in 1985 with Cannon’s Xapshot. Now images were produced on video disks and could be connected to TV sets for viewing. In 1990 Eastman Kodak introduced the Photo CD as a digital image storage medium that allows images from any source such as slides to be recorded on a compact disc. Through the introduction of “new digital electronic technologies for the registration, manipulation and storage of images” (Robins 29) a new era called “post-photography” started in the 1990s (Mitchell). William Mitchell sees the involvement of computers in image making, with the emergence of digital technology in 1990s, as a historical moment as important as the birth of the photograph in 1839. These developments radically changed how photographic images are produced, developed, transferred, used and perceived. The chemical darkroom has become the “electronic darkroom” of the computer. Hardcopy disappeared. Manipulating photographic images became more invisible and sophisticated. Photographic images get into the flow of the global information system as they become transmissible by the digital network that diminishes time and space

limitations (Lister 251-257). All these developments have changed views of the photographic image. The traditional belief that “photographs do not lie” has started to change and the truth of photography is being questioned as the new electronic technologies promise freedom and flexibility in the creation of images. In this way a new visual discourse begins to emerge through the changing apprehension of the nature of the photographic image.

Since there is an increase in the usage rate of digital cameras, the tradition of creating photo albums is changing. Mechanical technology makes it possible to store images in albums whereas digital images are usually kept as electronic data without needing to be printed. Photographs that are precious for the family used to be kept in albums prepared for years as the family matured. Now in our contemporary age, mechanically produced photographs are increasingly becoming replaced by multiple digital records of a moment stored in personal computers. From the beginning of the history of photography, photographs have always been image - objects that are interacting with people physically. Edwards describes the materiality of the photographic image and says: “photographs are both images *and* physical objects that exist in time and space and thus in social and cultural experience” (1). Photographic images “can have volume, opacity, tactility, and physical presence in the world” (Batchen “Each Wild Idea” 60) and retain an object quality in different forms like; daguerreotype - ambrotype, or photographic jewelry, framed photos, albums etc. However, photography’s object quality is changing through the introduction of digital technology. As digital photographs are kept in computers they only exist as electronic data if not chosen to be printed. They are becoming electronic data circulating in global information systems through the web.

Sasoon articulates this radical change in the materiality of the photographic object as follows; “fundamentally, what were once three-dimensional physical objects become one-dimensional and intangible digital surrogates, with the tactility and materiality of the original object being reduced to both an ephemeral and an ethereal state” (190). In this sense, unlike hard copies, screen based images are like copies of photographs that are stored and reduced into two-dimensions and which do not even allow the keeper to turn the back of the photograph to look for a note or trace from the photographer.

Although digital photographs are also printed, this technology does not enforce the owner to print photographs to access them. The owner may choose to print photographs or not. However, for a film-based photographic technology, in order to see images, one must develop photographs. This vivid change in the nature of the photograph from an photographic object to an immaterial digital image, not only changes the viewing practice, but also changes the way personal past is recorded. The means of storing photographs changes the social meaning of photography. For example, Edwards claims that albums have a performative quality. According to her, “not only do they [albums] narrativise photographs, such as in family or travel albums but their materiality dictates the embodied conditions of viewing, literally performing images in certain ways” (11). Similarly Langford says that “the album is an instrument of collective show and tell. It engenders a text that is not a text but a conversation. An album is an oral-photographic performance” (20). Digital photographs kept in computers have a different relationship with the user and may not always have such a performative character. Albums allow the adding of a personalized history or detail to images. As Batchen notes, “albums gave their owners the chance to have a creative input into the way in which photographs were displayed and seen” (“Each Wild Idea” 68). This transforms the basic images, to

memorial objects that are presented along with additional handwritten notes and mementos like a lock of hair, an invitation letter, a dried flower, a mourning souvenir etc. With the touch of the owner the album alters from a collection of images, to a handmade hybrid keepsake. It becomes not only an optical document like files created in computers in order to preserve photos, but also a multi-sensory tactile one. Batchen describes his experience of holding a daguerreotype in these words “hand and eye must work as one if a daguerreotype is to be brought into visibility; the look of images comes only with the feel of its materiality. Designed to be touched, these photographs touch back, casually grazing the pores of our skin with their textured surfaces” (“Each Wild Idea” 61). In contrast to photographs that are touching back, photographs preserved in the computer are always out of reach of touch. For example, handwriting is a way to personalize photography which enhances the memory quality. One can not add a direct handwritten note to a digital image without any mediation, in computers. The handwriting on the back of the postcard found in an album, along with today’s electronic tradition is replaced by a note written in standard formatted fonts created using a keyboard and sent online through the web. Beside touch, Batchen even adds sound to the tactility of albums. He says, “handwritten inscriptions suggest the voice of the writer, adding sound to the senses of touch and sight already engaged” (“Forget Me Not” 47). In brief, the weight and volume of albums, the combination of several materials, the smell of old paper, the multilayered quality, the inside and outside of the album etc. all these qualities provide a unique tactility to the photographic object that is mechanically produced. However, the experience of digital images are different; not so intimate, dense and close to subjects. The isolated digital images that are never in contact with the owner may have an alienating aspect. Photos stored in personal computers never get

worn out although the owner ages. While the ripped, eroded part of a photo in an old album tells a story of its own and its owner's past, the perfection of digital images seem to distance themselves from their owners. In this context Sasoon notes that, "in addition to the physical dimension of the object, details such as captions, retouching details, cropping instructions or markings on the back of photographs may reveal additional information that needs to be read in association with the image content. The physical condition of the object, the dirt and damage is evidence of its other lives" (190). So, instead of being a memorial object that creates a narrative for the family, in the age of electronic reproduction images are presented and viewed in a dematerialized form from computer screens. Similarly, Edward argues that "in many ways it is the materiality of people's photographs that make them 'their' own" (14). So, is not there a difference between a family photo album having tactile features and a well organized digital album created in computers by the electronic technology? To sum up, one can say that there is a radical change in the apprehension of mechanical photographs in the digital era.

### **3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1 WALTER BENJAMIN'S ACCOUNT OF PHOTOGRAPHY**

The philosopher and critic Walter Benjamin was born into a wealthy Jewish family from Berlin in 1892 and committed suicide in 1940 while escaping from Nazi Europe. He lived in Berlin, Moscow and Paris and witnessed many important events of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was a multifaceted theorist of cultural theory who has influenced the understanding of art. He was intrigued by the aesthetic implications of new forms of media and visual technologies that have transformed social, political and cultural patterns of modernity. His ideas have left their mark on all areas of contemporary theory and mass media from architecture, painting, sculpture, radio, sound recording to photography and film. Benjamin's intellectual interest concerned the historical and political dimensions of visual phenomena. Benjamin's writings were affected by the catastrophic events of the early twentieth century such as the First World War, Fascism, economic chaos, emigration and exile. He had a critical stance on the dominant ideologies of his period. In his writings criticism on modernity, innovations of visual technologies, metropolitan experience, mass culture, fascism and historical change can be seen. His stunning modern cultural analyses aimed to reveal possibilities of contemporary cultural forms. Gilloch writes about Benjamin along these lines;

Although much of his work explored obscure, forgotten historical forms and fragments, his purpose was always a present (and political) one.

Dismal dramas, no longer read or performed; obsolete objects and absurdly outmoded fashions; unfrequented places and buildings; and the faces of now-forgotten, long-dead people captured in photographs – Benjamin’s abiding concern with all such dusty, derelict things (...) derived from the critical imperative to perceive the secret significance of such untimely things in the present, to ‘actualize’ them by identifying and igniting their explosive, incandescent potential. (4-5)

Benjamin’s style of writing is similar to his intellectual thought which can be characterized as a mosaic. His *Arcades Project* is a huge collection of disjointed notes and his ideas about history as discontinuous and fragmented can be given as examples.

Benjamin in his essay “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” distinguished between two kinds of historiographers. Historicism vis-à-vis historical materialism is what is discussed in the essay. Benjamin critiques the linear progress of history and proposes that the movement of history is not linear or following. It is fragmentary and discontinuous, that is, it is created by dialectical images. According to him “the true picture of past flits by. The past can be seized only as an image which flashes up at the instant when it can be recognized and is never seen again” (“Thesis” 247). Benjamin rejects the notion of a historicism that assumes a history idea that has an “‘eternal’ image of the past” (“Thesis” 254). The historicist sees history as a still “chain of events,” whereas on the other hand the historical materialist sees a ruined past in need of recovery (“Thesis” 249). Ferris writes that, for Benjamin, history “is to be understood as an image in which past comes together in present” (14). According to Caygill, Benjamin



makes a distinction between historicism and historical materialism in terms of the experience of the past. Historicism has an experience *of* the past. It regards the past as an object that is eternally present. However, in historical materialism “the historical object ceases to be an object *of* and becomes a participant *in* an historical experience”. This is “constructive rather than epic narrative” (Caygill 90).

According to the traditional practice of history, history is a treasure, a heritage. This is so for victors and rulers in history. History is a chain of events that results in a historical continuity that creates a social utopian class agreement. However, for dominated classes history is like an arena of plunder and a place of ruin. For them, history is a story collection that connects the past to the present but acts with a “barbarism” that erases and overlooks their stories. There is no place for the stories of the ruled in historicism. In this sense Benjamin writes that:

There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism. And just as such a document is not free of barbarism, barbarism taints also the manner in which it was transmitted from one owner to another. A historical materialist therefore, dissociates himself from it as far as possible. He regards it as his task to brush history against the grain. (“Thesis” 248)

The historical materialist does not collect values that allows the continuum of the dominant culture system but collects the remains of history. He searches for meaning not in systematic wholes but in ruins, the bit of pieces that are left over from old cultural

systems. For Benjamin, culture is not a complete whole. It is debris and only fragments can be saved from that ruin. The image of history can be found in the faded waste objects of history.

Benjamin's Arcades Project, which is an immense collection of notes, images, quotes and citations, is a kind of criticism of the idea of progressive development. In progressive history, the monumental proportions were equated with capitalist and imperialist expansion. Benjamin reversed this discourse and concentrated on the small, rejected, disposed objects. He focused on the trash of history. Susan Buck-Morss explains Benjamin's ideas in these words:

Benjamin focuses on small, overlooked motifs in the historical sources that explode it. Where the myth imagined the forces of machines as power driving history forward, Benjamin provides material evidence that history had not budged. Indeed, history stands so still, it gathers dust. The historical documents attest to it. (95)

Benjamin's "A Small History of Photography", written in 1931 and his groundbreaking essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", written in 1936, both examine the invention and development of photography and film. His main concern is whether or not this new media changed the characteristic of art and if yes, how the entire nature of art was transformed by the introduction of these mediums. Benjamin, in his "Work of Art" essay, particularly discusses these new forms of producing art and their consequences for the capitalist industry of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In his 1936 essay he

explains that the work of art has always been reproducible in time by using woodcut, engraving, etching and lithography. However, the development of mechanical reproduction, that is becoming dominant more and more over time, is a new phenomena. Historically, by the development of woodcutting, for the first time graphic art became reproducible. Lithography carried the technique of reproduction to a new stage as it allowed graphic art to be put on the market. Lithography had the ability to catch the changes of daily life and competed with printing. After a few decades it was challenged by the invention of photography. Photography freed the hand of the artist and the whole responsibility shifted to the eye of the artist. The eye, that perceives quicker than a hand can draw, allowed photography to catch the speed of speech. In comparison with previous reproduction methods, by the invention of photography, copies became the outcome of an autonomous technical process. These changes in the reproduction structure have caused a radical shift in the perception of art. Photography and then film technology, allowed the reproduction of original work. This situation had crucial results.

By the introduction of mechanical technologies, day by day art became an object for the masses. This is because the mechanical copying process images that exist in a place at a specific time can now be seen simultaneously by a range of people in a diverse range of contexts. The meaning of the image has become independent of the presence of the original work or the original context. In Benjamin words, reproduced works of art, even the best ones, lack one element: “its presence in time & space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be” (“Work of Art” 214). Benjamin calls this lacking element “aura”. “Aura” is used in order to explain the effect of the new cultural - technological developments.

Benjamin proposes the concept of “aura” as a way to differentiate the original artwork and the reproductions. “The word ‘aura’ connotes qualities accessible to vision (brilliance, luminosity, glow) and phenomena that can be sensed from afar” (Shiff 64). There are such associations with “aura” because as a term it comes from the Greek and Latin word for a cool or warm breeze. Benjamin’s “aura” is a complex concept that involves tensions between space and time by being both distant and close. It is always out of reach. He introduces his “aura” in an earlier essay called “A Short History of Photography” as “a strange weave of space and time” (259) and in his 1936 “Work of Art” essay “aura” is defined as “... the unique phenomenon of a distance, however, close it may be” (216). “Aura” is something subtle, inaccessible and intangible. Stephen Nichols further explains Benjamin’s “aura” as a “mystique emanating – in the experience of the viewer – from a natural or artistic object, a mystique that translated into the viewer’s sense of a spatial or temporal distance interposing itself between the viewer and the object” (256). Even if the viewer is close to the artwork, there is always a feeling of gap. Benjamin also proposes “aura” as an experience. He explains “aura”, the eliminated term, in analogy with the experience of nature. He describes it as follows:

While resting on a summer's noon, to trace a range of mountains on the horizon, or a branch that throws its shadow on the observer, until the moment or the hour become part of their appearance — that is what it means to breathe the aura of those mountains, that branch. (“Short History” 250)

Via photography mountain sight perceived in a unique moment is replaced with the experience of a mechanically reproduced image. Although the reproduced images are

perfect they are always missing the presence of the real objects; “its presence in time and space” that provide the moment’s aura (“Work of Art” 214). Shiff, when commenting on Benjamin’s description of the “aura” of the mountain sight writes; “such experience establishes unmediated bodily contact; you breath the object, like the air, in and out” (65). Benjamin also explains the idea by the presence of the actor in the stage and the absence of the actor in the cinema. According to him, the “aura” is tied to the presence of the actor and there is no copy of his/her existence and “aura”. In reproductions, the “here and now” of a work of art is missing. For Benjamin the “presence of the original is the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity” and “the whole sphere of authenticity is outside technical (...) reproducibility” (“Work of Art” 214). The original, while preserving the authority, the technical reproduction that is perceived as the forgery, does not. This has two reasons. Firstly; the technical reproduction is more independent than the manual reproduction. Benjamin explains this by giving the possibilities that the photograph technology provides to the artist like enlargement and slow motion. Such possibilities help the artist using them to capture images that escape from natural vision. The second reason is the ability of technical reproduction to “put the copy of the original into situations which would be out of reach for the original itself” (“Work of Art” 214). After all, technical reproduction, either in the form of photography or phonograph record, brings the original to the beholder. These two facts effect and interfere with the core of the art object, that is to say its authenticity and tradition. In this context Benjamin claims that what is lost in a work of art when reproduced is its “aura”, its uniqueness. So, in the age of mechanical reproduction, the copy of the original is detached from tradition through losing its “aura” and meets the beholder in his/her own

situation and context. The copy of the original has an ability to reach the world that is impossible for the original work of art. Benjamin describes the situation in these words:

The technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. By making many reproductions it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence. And in permitting the reproduction to meet the beholder or listener in his own particular situation, it reactivates the object reproduced. These two processes lead to a tremendous shattering of tradition which is the obverse of the contemporary crisis and renewal of mankind. (“Work of Art” 215)

Baecker argues that what Benjamin was explaining by the uniqueness of work of art is artworks “here and now” which is lost in our contemporary era. He says “Benjamin did not literally demand that a work of art be unique. He did not mean by uniqueness that there is nothing in the world comparable” (12).

The main thesis of Benjamin in his “Work of Art” essay is the future decay of the “aura” and the authenticity of artworks by mechanical mass reproduction in an age of rapid technological developments. So, “aura” is the eliminated element in the era of technical reproducibility. Jan Mieszkowski further explains the decay of the “aura” as follows: “we understand reproducibility to lead to the withering of the aura, it is not because it introduces a difference or distance that was lacking in the original, since distance is precisely what is cultivated by the rituals of auratic art, mediacy rather than immediacy” (40). For Benjamin there are two reasons for the contemporary decay of the “aura”. First

is the growing desire to get hold of an object closer by its reproduction. The second reason is the “contemporary masses desire to bring things ‘closer’ spatially and humanly” (“Work of Art” 217). Although the copy lacks an “aura” these two desires lead contemporary subjects to accept the reproduction of the original and cause the disappearance of the “aura”. However, there is an undeniable difference between the copy -the image in a magazine- and the original –what is seen by the naked eye. The original can be characterized by its “uniqueness” and “permanence”, while on the other hand “transitoriness” and “reproducibility” are the nature of the copy (“Work of Art” 217). So, “aura” is the power an image or an object has because of its singularity and authenticity. It is something that the original image has and the copy lacks.

“Aura” is closely related to tradition. Benjamin says “the uniqueness of a work of art is inseparable from its being imbedded in the fabric of tradition” (“Work of Art” 217). Tradition is alive and changeable. Benjamin gives the example of how the statue of Venus is perceived differently in various traditional contexts. For Greeks the statue of Venus is an “object of veneration”, while on the other hand, for the cleric of the Middle Ages, it is an “ominous idol” (“Work of Art” 217). Although they both regarded the statue differently, what they confronted was the same: the statue’s uniqueness, yet its “aura”. “Aura” is tied to physical presence and it is in the domain of traditions and rituals. “Aura” is the halo that gives the object its uniqueness and authenticity. Authenticity is what connects the artwork to its unique moment and place of origin so it is hard to differentiate authenticity and “aura” from each other. Benjamin, after indicating the connection of “aura” with authenticity, tradition and ritual, discusses the possibilities that the break between the artwork and ritual creates with the disappearance

of “aura”. Early artworks were in service of a ritual: the magical and the religion and could never succeed in being separated from their ritual function. This ritualistic basis is still seen in the profane examples. However, by photography Benjamin says that “for the first time in word history, mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual” and continues “to an ever greater degree the work of art reproduced becomes the work of art designed for reproducibility” (“Work of Art” 218). In this sense, Benjamin sees the emancipatory aspect of the new mechanical reproduction technology for the masses. New technological possibilities give the chance of encountering art works to the masses by breaking their authenticity. The “aura” of authenticity decays when they are reproduced but mechanical reproduction breaks the link between the work of art and the ritual. Accessing works becomes more independent. “Aura” is the thing that gives the artwork its uniqueness and its authority. It is the bond that connects the artwork to the ritual. The bond between the artwork and the authority of the tradition is destroyed by reproducibility. The vanishing of the “aura” prepares the condition for a more democratic art. This break of artwork from traditions, rituals and the “aura” makes it possible to politicize art. In Benjamin’s words “instead of being based on ritual, it begins to be based on another practice- politics” (“Work of Art” 218). Artwork is freed from rituals and now can be politicized which opens the masses to more collective communication possibilities. However, this emancipation for the masses and the loss of “aura” entails a conflict because the mechanical reproduction technologies are still controlled by the forces of capitalism.

Benjamin defines two orders in the reception of an art work: its cult value and exhibition value. In the order of cult; to exist is what’s important for ceremonial objects, rather than



their being on view. Cult value demands the secrecy of the art work. However, after the disassociation of the art work from its ritual basis opportunities created for its exhibition are increased. By mechanical reproduction technologies not only the qualitative nature of artwork is affected but also a shift occurs in the perception and exhibition mode of the work of art. The audience's practice of viewing and responding to the art work changed. Also cult value is replaced by the artwork's exhibition value. As the cult value declines, the exhibition value increases. Reproducibility allows "absolute emphasis" on exhibition ("Work of Art" 219). The disappearance of "aura" in mechanical reproduction foreshadows the shift from the artwork as cult (e.g.: religious objects) to the artwork as exhibit (e.g.; in museum or photography and cinema). Especially in photography exhibition value displaces cult value.

Benjamin in his "Work of Art" essay regards old photographs differently from photography itself and discusses their "auratic" value. According to him, by mechanical reproduction technologies not only the artwork is affected but also a shift occurs in the perception and exhibition mode of the work of art. The audience's practice of viewing and responding to the art work has changed. Also the cult value is replaced by the artwork's exhibition value. In contemporary photography, the exhibition value displaces the cult value. However, early photographs still have a cult value and "aura" because their focus is the human face. It is the subject and the "cult remembrance of loved ones that gives old photographs their "auratic" value ("Work of Art" 219). Benjamin gives Atget's photographs of "deserted Paris streets", in contrast to early portraits that have an "aura" ("Work of Art" 218). For him Atget's early modern Paris photographs are ordinary evidence of history and deserted like scenes of crime. Benjamin grants "aura"

to faces of the early portrait photographs but for him faster paper print photographs, like Atget's, do not retain any. For Benjamin, photography loses its magical power after 1880 through new techniques of artificial highlights and retouching, because of the made-up authenticity.

Later on Benjamin in his essay "Thesis on the Philosophy of History" develops a different understanding of "aura". This time he considers "aura" as the experience of the subject's gaze that is returning from what s/he is looking at. In order to explain, he uses Paul Klee's painting named *Angelus Novus*. According to him, in this painting there is a depiction of the "angel of history" that looks back to the past in time. What the angel sees is a light in the destruction of an era ("Thesis" 249). He wants to stay but can not because of the storm that fills his wings. Benjamin calls the storm the progress. The last look of the angel in time and the brightness he sees is the "aura" that Benjamin defines as the returning gaze of the spectator.

Depending on Benjamin's "Work of Art" essay, one can compare and contrast traditional art and the art in the age of mechanical reproduction by the keywords Benjamin used throughout his essay. The original, the basis of traditional art work, can be defined by the words: "aura", unique existence, authenticity, distance, ritual, cult value and exemplified by painting. On the other hand, what defines the copy is decay of the "aura", mass existence, multiplicity, closeness, political basis, exhibition value and is exemplified by photography - film.

### 3.2 ROLAND BARTHES' *CAMERA LUCIDA: REFLECTIONS ON PHOTOGRAPHY*

Roland Barthes' last work *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, is a book of theory that presents a new mode of perceiving photography and discusses what photography is. This is a reflection of Barthes' "ontological desire" to discover photography's fundamental features (3). At the same time, *Camera Lucida* is also a book that narrates Barthes' relation to photography in a subjective manner by analyzing personal photographs. The whole book is comprised of two parts. In the first section, Barthes identifies photography and questions whether or not "photography has a genius of its own" (3). While discussing photography "in itself" he develops several concepts that could be employed in analysis of photographs and tries to understand why he is attracted to certain photographs (3). The second part is devoted to a more personal discussion about Barthes' observations and experiences of looking at particular family photographs. In this part, he searches for his "true" mother among her snapshots.

Among Barthes' several conceptualizations about photography in *Camera Lucida*, I will mainly concentrate on his analyses of the photographic referent, time and death. In relation to these themes, his fundamental concepts "*punctum*" and "*studium*" will also be discussed. These central points are critical for my discussion on dispossessed family photographs. Because one can observe that these main ideas that Barthes discusses concerning photography as a whole become more and more emphasized in my object of study that is, "dispossessed family photographs". In this sense, this chapter focuses on Barthes' concepts of photography that are vital for my discussion.

For Barthes, photography is different from other kinds of images. He starts *Camera Lucida* by asking what essential nature of photography distinguishes it from other images. Before answering, Barthes defines elements of photographic practice in order to analyze photographs. He observes that every photograph can be the object of three practices: “to look”, “to do”, and “to undergo”. “To look” is associated with the “*spectator*” that is the viewer. “To do” is the practice of the “*operator*”, that is, the photographer. “To undergo” involves the photographed subject or object, that is, the referent which he calls the “*spectrum*” (9).<sup>3</sup> The photographic referent is an especially important element for Barthes because it is what differentiates photographs from other modes of representation. Photography is different from other systems of representation because of its special relation to its referent. The photographic referent is poles apart from the referent of painting. In painting, the referent must not be seen, whereas in photography without the referent the photograph can not occur. For photography, reference is the “founding order” in the sense that the referent is inseparable from the photograph (Barthes 77). Barthes explains the close relation between the photograph and its referent by focusing on the first reaction of a subject when encountering a photograph. One immediately says ‘this is me’ rather than saying ‘this is a picture of me’. That is why a photograph, as a distinct object, is invisible and unclassifiable. The close relation between photography and its referent (Barthes suggests that “photograph always carries its referent with itself” (5), “they are glued together” (6), “the referent adheres” (6)) makes the photograph invisible. In spite of seeing the photograph itself,

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<sup>3</sup> He particularly chooses to use the word “*Spectator*” in relation to the words root as “spectacle”. Because according to Barthes every photograph has a spectacle of a returning death (9). The relation he develops on photography and death will be discussed later on.

one tends to recognize the referent. Therefore, it is hard to concentrate on the photograph itself. For Barthes photography always “evades” for it is unclassifiable (4). Also a photograph has an ability to repeat “what could never be repeated existentially” (4). Although it can be reproduced infinitely, photography actually records a moment that can happen only once. It copies what can never be repeated again. Barthes defines this peculiarity of photography by using a Lacanian term, as “the Real”, “the *Tuché*” (4). This is what makes the photograph unique. He asserts that a photograph “is never distinguished from the referent” (5).

Barthes differentiates photographs into two categories: the ones that create an adventure on him and the ones that do not. The adventure created by the photograph is not related to the content of the image. It depends on the reading of the “*spectator*”. He calls the effect of such special photographs that create an attraction and adventure on the subject “*animation*” because when such photographs reach the subject, they animate and are animated by the subject (20). One can say that not every photograph creates the same magnetism for Barthes. So, why are some photographs attractive and some are not? Barthes’ answer to this question is the co-presence of two contrasting elements. The co-presence of elements that do not “belong to the same world” creates duality and contrast which make photographs adventurous and attractive (23). He distinguishes these two themes in photography as the “*studium*” and the “*punctum*”. According to Barthes these two elements are crucial for a “*spectator*” involved in viewing a photograph. They function on different levels but they are always related to each other. The “*studium*” is “the order of *liking*, not of *loving*” that can be found almost in every photograph (Barthes 27). It derives from culture and it is a kind of educational knowledge. It is the

level that is determined by the social context and therefore it is culturally coded. It is the principle that makes the photograph able to talk to the audience in general. It is the order that conveys the intentions of the “*Operator*”. For Barthes the “*Operator*” aims to surprise the “*spectator*”. He talks about five kinds of surprises that create photographic shock: rare referent, details that normally the eye can not catch, the prowess of the “*Operator*”, technical features (blurring - deceptive perspective etc.) and the lucky find. (32-35). The shock created by surprises in the photograph belongs to the level of “*studium*”. To inform, to surprise and to shock belong to the domain of “*studium*”. It represents the *spectator's* attraction to the image, arising from cultural, political and personal background and interest.

The second element which functions along with “*studium*” is “*punctum*”. Unlike “*studium*”, “*punctum*” is not culturally coded and not a function of language. Therefore, it is harder to describe “*punctum*”. It is the detail which changes the image and the reading of it. One can say that it is the accident in the photo that “pricks” and “pierces” the eye (Barthes 26). It is the unintentional detail, the hole in the photo that catches the eye and “fills the whole picture” (Barthes 45). Intentionally put details do not prick the eye in the way “*punctum*” does. These features of “*punctum*” are what break the “*studium*”. Not like “*studium*” that calls the general interest, “*punctum*” functions at a subjective and personal level. It is something experienced. It is the wounding, personally touching detail that captures the eye of the “*spectator*” and creates a private meaning. It is brief and active. That is why Barthes also describes it as a “sting, speck, cut, little hole – and also a castoff dice” (27). Although “*studium*” might shock and surprise there is no wound and love in it. However, “*punctum*” does not necessarily shock, it always wounds

as it works at an intensely private level. As “*punctum*” functions at a personal level, it has a shifting meaning that can not be fixed. Its effect may change on the basis of the time of looking and the mood of the “*spectator*”.

“*Punctum*” has a power of expansion. Firstly, expansion occurs as a result of what Barthes calls the “thinking eye” (45). Seeing via the “thinking eye” allows the “*spectator*” to add something to the photo through memory. “*Punctum*” is a personal addition to the photo. It is something that one adds to it. In addition, it is “what is nonetheless already there” (Barthes 55). The second expansion is such that although “*punctum*” is a detail, it has an ability to fill the entire photograph. “*Punctum*” is the element which allows photography to create a “blind field” (Barthes 57). In contrast to cinema, ordinary photographs are motionless and can not create a “blind field”. However, once there is “*punctum*”, that is to say the ability to think beyond the image, the “blind field” is created. Barthes calls ordinary photographs that include “no duality, no indirection, no disturbance” “unary photographs” (41). News and pornographic photographs are examples of this category. In pornographic photography, there is no “*punctum*”; instead body parts are made fetish objects. In erotic photographs however, the “*spectator*” adds something to the photo, such photos “take the *spectator* outside its frame” (Barthes 59). “*Punctum*” is the detail that attracts the “*spectator*” in a “unary photograph” and it allows seeing beyond the image.

In the second part of *Camera Lucida*, Barthes describes a second level of “*punctum*”. That is the “*punctum*” of Time. The “*punctum*” of Time is the existence of the dead within the photograph. Looking at the photograph of Lewis Payne who is photographed

in a prison cell while waiting for his execution, Barthes points out that the “*punctum*” arises from the fact that the person in the photograph is going to die. In that photograph two different temporalities emerge since, one can read at the same time both “this will be” and “*this has been*”: the referent as “already dead” and as “going to die”. Since, photographs invoke our future death, he maintains photography is forced into a paradoxical unreality: “on the one hand, it is not there, on the other, it has indeed been” (115). The “*Punctum*” of Time disrupts the linearity of time.

What is particular in photography is the certainty of the referent’s presence in front of the lens. The referent’s having been there can not be denied. Barthes calls this “that-has-been”. It is what every photograph demonstrates. The photograph is the proof of the referent’s presence and existence at that time. Therefore, there is a superimposition of reality and the past in photographs. In photographs the past finds a space in the realm of the present. In this sense, photography is the evidence Barthes claims of “what I see has been here” and “that has been ” which suggests that the subject existed in that specific moment in the past (77). In this sense, the photograph is the verification of the presence of a thing at a certain past moment. At the same time the photograph confirms its complete pastness, that is to say, its death. Therefore, Barthes considers every photograph as an annunciation of the death of the subject. Death is a central theme in *Camera Lucida*. Barthes sees death implicit in every photograph. For him, this is the scandalous effect of photography. “Ultimately, what I am seeking in the photograph taken of me”, he writes is Death. For him “Death is the *eidos* of that Photograph” (15).

All photographs have the superimposition of reality and past (“that has been”) but not



all of them strike the “*spectator*”. The outstanding aspect of photography’s “*that-has-been*” quality is enclosed when it says something to the “*spectator*”. It is experienced among thousands of photographs if a particular image catches and arrests the “*spectator*”. In this context, Barthes explains his experience of the genius of photography when he finds a special photograph of his mother: the winter garden photograph. Barthes describes his trial to find his recently died mother in her several snapshots. He claims that it is hard to find and recall all features of his mother as a whole in one photo. One can only trace parts which reflect the loved one’s essence in the ordinary photographs. Photographs fragment the person. The “*spectator*” can not recognize the subject in the photo as a whole or as a total being but finds fragments that reflect the subject. The recognition is therefore, not essential and not all photographs reflect the subject’s being as a whole. According to Barthes, these photographs are ordinary objects. They may have only an analogical quality but never reveal the truth of the referent. But there are some photos which reveal the essence of the subject who is photographed. In this sense, Barthes finds / recognizes / rediscovers his “true” mother in a photograph that he calls “the winter garden photograph” taken in his mother’s childhood. Barthes considers there is something indescribable in photography. It is “something inexpressible: evident (this is the law of the Photograph) yet improbable (I cannot prove it)” (107). He defines this something that is hard to define as “air”. The “air” is something excessive in the photograph through which one can truly recognize the individual. It appears in photographs when “being” coincides with self (109). For Barthes, “air” is the expression of truth. He experiences the “air” in the winter garden photograph. He does not disclose that special photograph in the book because that would be an ordinary photograph for the reader. The photograph can only interest the reader’s

“*studium*”.

Throughout *Camera Lucida*, Barthes makes a connection between photography and madness several times. For him photography is mad because of its close link to death. At first, he explains this connection via the experience of posing to the camera. The photographic subject cannot help but contrive a pose in front of the camera. This is an effort to assure that the image captured coincides with oneself. This effort usually fails. According to Barthes, posing is the threshold of the subject's transformation to an image/object. Photography has an ability to objectify the subject. The idea of looking at oneself on a paper (as a photograph) is mad, since it is a manifestation of one's own death. For Barthes, the result of photography is a transformation from subject to object. This conversion is an experience of a “micro-version of death” for subjects (14). Moreover, it is the expression of the conscious separation from the identity. Posing is the moment that one loses one's identity, literally dies and becomes a specter. Barthes explains his discomfort while posing in these words: “(...) I am neither subject nor object but a subject who feels he is becoming an object: I then experience a micro version of death (of parenthesis): I am truly becoming a specter” (14). The subject that is turned to an object signals the death of the identity because for Barthes photography is the apprehension of oneself as other. In his words: “for the photography is the advent of myself as other: a cunning dissociation of consciousness from identity” (12). This apprehension of oneself as image has a self-alienating aspect which discloses the total madness of photography.

Secondly, Barthes' explanation of the connection between madness and death is based on the idea of Time as "*punctum*". According to Barthes the essence – "*noeme*" of photography is the quality of "that-has-been" (115). In photography one can conceive at the same time the absence of the referent and the fact that the referent has indeed existed: simultaneously "it is not there" and "but it has indeed been" (115). Barthes explains the madness of this paradoxical situation as follows:

For until this day no representation could assure me of the past of a thing except by intermediaries; but with Photography, my certainty is immediate: no one in the world can undecieve me. The photograph then, becomes a bizarre *medium*, a new form of hallucination: false on the level of perception, true on the level of time (...): a mad image, chafed by reality. (115)

This conflicting nature of photography therefore challenges ideas of time and death radically, and this medium is for Barthes mad. He further explains the madness of photography via his experience when he is hit by the "*punctum*" of Time. He describes: "passed beyond the unreality of the thing represented, I entered crazily into the spectacle, into the image, taking into my arms what is dead, what is going to die" (117). According to him every photograph's indication of one's future death is also madness. Whether or not the photographed subject is already dead, every photo predicts the inevitable death which will occur in the future. Every photograph, Barthes suggests, is this catastrophe (96).

In this context, society, in order to eliminate the madness of photography, tries to tame it in two ways. The first way of domestication is to consider photography in the domain of art because art is not mad. However, photography can be considered as art only if its “*noeme*” of “that-has-been” is forgotten. When the essence of photographs “that-has-been” is not seen, they cannot be disturbing anymore. The second way of taming is, regarding by photography as banal and ordinary until it can not assert its nature that is, its scandal and madness. Barthes thinks that nowadays people live according to a “generalized image-repertoire” (118). The stereotyped images become the precondition of experience. In order to get pleasure, there should be the joining of the “worn-out” image (118). Considering the United States, he indicates that there are only images existing, since everything is changed to images. To produce and consume is passing through images. Instead of consuming beliefs, now societies consume images in order to keep them from reaching madness. When a photograph is isolated from its personal reading, it becomes mute. The potential madness of photography is eliminated when photography is generalized in such ways.

#### **4. “DISPOSSESSED FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS” IN THE DOMAIN OF TURKISH ANTIQUE MARKET**

##### **4.1 MAPPING ANTIQUE MARKETS IN TURKEY**

It is possible to discern networks and practices of “collecting” as a distinct cultural domain with vaguely defined and constantly shifting boundaries. Yet, this cultural domain generates its own tacit rules and principles governing the circulation of objects among different arbitrators. At each step during this process, the material and cultural value of an object is reassessed and change. The object must first be taken out from its original context (family photo album) and re-located in new contexts constituted by arbitrators on the basis of collectors’ preferences. The journey of a photograph from personal domain to the public one can have different patterns. Parties involved in this journey are the “owner” and/or relatives; paper-waste/scrap gatherers; dealers; antique or second-hand book sellers; auctioneers and collectors. At each step the photographs may stay for a while in different orders and combinations. At every step the value, status and the meaning of the item shifts. This is why these “dispossessed family photographs” can never have a stable and fixed meaning or a place. They are always on the road. This chapter is devoted to the investigation of the complex journey of photographs from “owners” to sellers / collectors.

In the domain of collecting, the object is no more considered as a personal belonging, but seen as a trace from the past that has a documentary or collecting value. As every object is rare or unique, collecting is a never ending search for the accurate pieces for a collection. For a photograph collector, there is a broad field of investigation in this realm of collecting. They search for clues from the past to be attached to their collections and enlighten their subject of interest. “Dispossessed family photographs” can be found in several shops and bazaars like antique markets, flea-markets, junkshops, second-hand book stores, antique shops and auctions.<sup>4</sup>

The broad range of interests allows every object of daily life to become a collection piece one day. Such a broad range of interests causes very personal objects to gain a collection value under a specific topic and category. Collectors have several possibilities in searching for new collection pieces at the basis of their preferences. But there is not a definite and concrete map that one can follow in the domain of collecting. The dynamics of the domain always changes. Even in the market there are no clear-cut market values or a definite object circulation or time schedule. Objects may come and go time to time in different orders. The price is determined on the basis of several factors by sellers/collectors’ expertise and experience. Nothing is stable and written. So, the more the collector is involved in the system, the more s/he becomes an insider and expert.

Insiders know the approximate prices, where to go when and what to buy from whom.

Insiders know where items come from. They are invited to special auctions and

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<sup>4</sup>There are also several online-shopping possibilities and online auction web sites for collectors in Turkey. Some examples for online shopping would be; <http://www.eskiden.com>, <http://www.kobiline.com/web/gunera/>, <http://www.sahafturk.com/>, <http://www.sanatkitabevi.com.tr/efemera.asp>, <http://www.tereke.com/>, <http://www.bariskitabevi.com/>. Some examples for online auction sites would be [www.gittigidiyor.com](http://www.gittigidiyor.com), [www.elitkoleksiyon.com](http://www.elitkoleksiyon.com), [muzayede@rodostocollection.com](mailto:muzayede@rodostocollection.com) or the international site; [www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com)

occasions that public is not informed about. Because of this imprecision of the domain, experienced collectors have special relations with sellers. As collecting is a long-lasting pursuit, the sale is not always immediate. The store of the seller is always in transition. Several items come and go. These places therefore, should be visited and checked time to time. Likewise sellers know collectors individually. Both collectors and sellers have a particularly area of specialization. The collector knows the seller's area of expertise and what s/he usually sells and the seller knows his/her customer's/collector's interests. Depending on this knowledge the seller also searches for items that his/her customers could be interested in. If a special item arrives at the seller, before putting it on display s/he usually calls up his/her customer. This unspoken agreement between the seller and the collector turns relations more personal and intimate. Generally, since the seller is also a collector, the communication between them is in the same ground. The path of a collector in his/her pursuit needs special knowledge about the location of antique shops and special knowledge about the characteristic of the shop and the seller. One can find antique shops concentrated in specific places like Samanpazarı or Tunalı District in Ankara, or Çukurcuma in Istanbul. But there are several antique shops scattered around the city. There are shops that are located far away from the central shopping points in ordinary streets.<sup>5</sup> Even some are located at basements of apartments as if avoiding the visit of uninterested people.<sup>6</sup> They are generally visited by members of the collecting domain. Every collector follows a different path according to his/her collection. There may be several stops for a “dispossessed family photograph” in its journey.

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<sup>5</sup> An example for antique shops out of central shopping district would be *Eskici*: Muharrem Sönmez's shop that is located in Kuveyt Street. No 7/C-D Güvnevler, Ankara.

<sup>6</sup> An example for an antique shop that is located at the basement of an apartment would be *2. El* that is located in Paris Street in Ankara.

#### 4.1.1 Antique and Second Hand Book Sellers/Shops

Antique shops are first places to visit for collectors. Usually every antique shop and seller has a specific area of interest like the collector. One might be specialized in selling furniture or ephemera or tin materials (toy, boxes etc.) or porcelain or paintings etc. Not every antique shop values and sells old photographs.



**Figure 2.** *Eskici* an antique shop Ayrancı District, Ankara (16.01.05).

As it is valid for all kind of collections, selling old photographs also demands a specific kind of familiarity with items. The knowledge of discriminating the valuable images on the basis of several criteria is needed. Antique sellers who are interested in selling ephemera items tend to put also photographs on the market. They buy photographs



either from auctions, private auctions organized for insiders, dealers, flea-markets or direct from house clearances. Antique sellers choose photographs that either have a documentary and collecting value or are the earlier examples of photograph technology such as daguerreotypes, cabinet cards etc. They buy and sell special photographs that have a collection value. In an antique shop one may find a photo or album that brings a light on to history; a famous person's photograph along with his/her inscription at the back; a cabinet card with an imprint of a famous photographer / studio; rare photo cards and postcards of different countries and cities etc. The seller tends to treat these photographs as unique antique objects that survived history. Conservation of photographs is given priority. Photographs are cared, renewed and preserved in special catalogues or albums that lengthen their lifespan. Usually albums that have a collection value are maintained as they are. Prices likely to be higher than flea-markets or secondhand book stores. The seller generally gives detailed information to the buyer about the photograph's importance and collection value. Inexperienced collectors may learn a lot from them while they know a lot about what they sell. Usually antique sellers that are also selling photographs are also personally interested in the subject and have a rich private collection of it.

Beside antique shops, in second hand book stores one may also find old "dispossessed photographs". Although the sellers' sources of finding items are similar to antique sellers, the characteristic of second hand book shops are different. Along with old books and ephemera, second hand book sellers also sell photographs. Photographs are not considered as valuable as books in these stores. "Dispossessed family photographs" generally reach sellers as a part of the entire book collection that they purchase at house

clearances. Therefore, images are not chosen and bought specifically for sale but reach the seller along with the mass of books. Usually second hand book stores sell loads of simple and ordinary “dispossessed family photographs” that do not have a high collection value. If the seller has knowledge about the issue, s/he categorizes photographs and sells them accordingly to different prizes. They may also sell the ones that have a high collection value to antique sellers.



**Figure 3.** *Bariş Kitabevi* a second hand book store in Aslıhan Passage, Galatasaray District, İstanbul. (04.12.2004)

Photographs are usually stored and displayed in boxes without any effort to preserve their original condition. The seller usually does not preserve albums as a whole. They take out photographs from the album and sell every photo individually with a different price to reach maximum profit. When albums belong to ordinary families, it is considered more profitable to sell photographs one by one. It is because collectors usually are not interested in the whole story of ordinary families. As all collectors have a specific subject of interest, they search for photographs that they can categorize and include to their collection. For collectors, preserving the original context of an album is not important. They can choose one single photograph from an album without hesitation because the photograph might gain a new meaning in a different context together with the other pieces of their collection.

#### **4.1.2 Auctions and Flea-markets**

Antique sellers and second hand book sellers may also participate in flea markets and antique auctions either as a buyer, collector or seller. Experienced antique and second hand book sellers organize antique auctions several times in a year.<sup>7</sup> Photographs are not sold in every auction. Photographs with a high collection value are generally included in ephemera auctions.<sup>8</sup> Auctions are promoted by a catalogue by collectors and items are displayed in specific places before the auction day. Generally auctions are hold in

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<sup>7</sup> For antiques in general, some important auction organizations and organizers are: Antik AŞ (auction is organized by Turgay Artam), Koleksiyon A.Ş (Behruz Büyükoğlu). Kültür ve Sanat Varlıklarını Koruma ve Tanıtma Vakfı (Raffi Portakal). Librairie de Pera. Necef Antik Auction Organization, Maçka Mezat Antikacılık A.Ş, Burak Filateli.

<sup>8</sup> Examples for ephemera auctions organizations would be *Eski Zaman* Art and Culture Center organized by Korkut Erkan, *Sanat Library* organized by Sami Önal and Suavi Aydın. *Elit Collection*.

famous hotels.<sup>9</sup> Auctioneers are generally experts in their area of collection and can be both a collector and a seller. Items put up for the auction are sold to the highest bidder. There are also several online-shopping sites and online auction web sites for collectors in Turkey.<sup>10</sup>

Street markets and flea-markets are the crucial sources that supply sellers and collectors. Here, one can find the raw and untreated items that are coming directly from house clearance and garbage. Prices are low and materials vary to fit every taste.



**Figure 4.** Counters from the flea market of Gölbaşı, Ankara (18.04.05).

<sup>9</sup> Examples for some hotels that have hosted auctions are; Swissotel The Bosphorus, Çırağan Sarayı, Kempinski Hotels, The Marmara Hotel, Istanbul Hilton Hotel, Istanbul Ceylan Inter-Continental Hotel, Hyatt Regency, Hilton International Ankara, Ankara Dedeman, Ankara Sheraton.

<sup>10</sup> Examples for online shopping sites would be: <http://www.eskiden.com>, <http://www.kobiline.com/web/gunera/>, <http://www.sahafturk.com/>, <http://www.sanatkitabevi.com.tr/efemera.asp>, <http://www.tereke.com/>, <http://www.bariskitabevi.com/>. Some examples for online auction sites would be [www.gittigidiyor.com](http://www.gittigidiyor.com) or the international site; [www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com)



Sellers are not necessarily experts on what they are selling. Usually items are not specified or categorized and do have yet a high collecting value. Collectors are not the only customers. People may go to street markets for several reasons. There is a real competition between the serious antique buyers on finding the valuable pieces at low prices. Some markets start to settle very early in the morning. Coming early in the morning, expert collectors/sellers compete to each other to find the best pieces. The location and popularity of the flea-market define the target audience.



**Figure 5.** A scene from the flea market of İskitler, Ankara (16.01.05).

The customer profile and prices changes depending on where the store is located.<sup>11</sup>

According to the unsaid classification of the flea-market, items on display and their prices change.<sup>12</sup> There is this unwritten agreement between buyers and sellers about the settlement of the market's time and date.<sup>13</sup> This can be every Sunday, or a specific Sunday in every month. Some of them starts early in the morning and some open their counters at lunch time.

#### **4.1.3 Dealers, Home clearances and House-hold Auctions**

No matter how different characteristics retails of the collecting domain have, from antique shops to flea markets the source is the same: dispossessed belongings of

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<sup>11</sup> An example for the changing customer profile and the prices would be the situation in antique markets of Ankara and İstanbul. The highest prices are the antique shops located in İstanbul at Çukurcuma and Nişantaşı. Flea markets also have a changing customer profile. For example Ayrancı Antique Bazaar was also popular among people with a high social-economic status. It used to gather once in a month and include sellers that come from nearby cities to sell their items. Not only dealers but also antique sellers that have a shop, had counters in the bazaar. There was a rich range of different prices among stands but mostly the prices were relatively higher than flea market of İtfaiye Meydanı, flea market of İskitler. On the other hand the flea-market that gathers every Sunday in İskitler is not popular among collectors and it is not attracting the interest of the buyers from high social-economic status because the items are generally real scraps. For the sake of collecting and selling, mostly the dealers and sellers visit the place. Between the scraps they are searching pieces that can have a collecting value. The items sold are generally bad in condition and coming direct from garbage by the waste gatherers. Some are displayed on the ground, in the wheelbarrows or on the counters. The pre-selection is made by the waste gatherers. The scraps are either sold to recycling units or displayed in flea markets. The prices are very low and the sellers do not generally have broad and detailed knowledge about collecting.

<sup>12</sup> In Ankara one can define five flea-markets with different characteristics that sell old materials. These are Ayrancı Antique Bazaar (Ayrancı Antika Pazarı), Gölbaşı Antique Bazaar (Gölbaşı Antika Pazarı), Samanpazarı, flea market of İtfaiye Meydanı (İtfaiye Meydanı Bit Pazarı), flea market of İskitler (İskitler Bit Pazarı). (Ayrancı Antique Bazaar, is not gathering anymore although it was a successful and popular one. It is cancelled in the second half of 2004 by the Chamber of Commerce because of the objections of local antique sellers).

<sup>13</sup> In the case of antique markets in Ankara, the settlement of the market's time and date can be given as an example: Samanpazarı gathers every Sunday at around 12:00 o'clock. Flea market of İtfaiye Meydanı gathers every Sunday at around 11:00 o'clock. Flea market of İskitler gathers around every Sunday at around 5 o'clock in the morning. Gölbaşı Antique Bazaar gathers every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month. Ayrancı Antique Bazaar used to gather every Sunday of each month at around 9 o'clock in the morning. The markets in Ankara are all gathering on Sundays for this specific occasion. They are not only popular among the collectors but also visited by other reasons.

families. Materials found in the market of collecting were used to be in the possession of a family. These materials have been given up for some reason. They could have been thrown away to the garbage, given away to scrap gatherers, sold to dealers in a house clearance or sold directly to the seller / collector in a household auction. The reason of getting rid of possessions even the personal ones are various: could be the death of the owner, sequestration, natural disasters, need for money, moving countries or simply throwing away.

The connection between the source and the collecting market is established by dealers. The dealer is the person who contacts the family in the first hand. Generally they are called by families who want to sell their belongings. Generally after the death of the owner, items pass to relatives. Relatives may not want to keep belongings of the family and calls up dealers. Dealers purchase materials from the house for a mass price. This is called home clearance. In home clearances the aim of the family is usually to get rid of materials as soon as possible to have a clean home maybe for rent, sale or stay after the death of the owner.<sup>14</sup> The need for cash can also be the reason. Generally the price is set after bargaining. Sometimes two or more dealers can be called. The dealer who gives the highest price gets materials. Antique shop owners or second hand book sellers can also be interested and invited in such events and acts as a dealer.

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<sup>14</sup> Sometimes families may organize a house hold auction where the complete content of a house is sold by an auction. Generally this happens if the home belongs to a rich family or the relatives of an important figure in history. For example the house hold auctions organized by ambassadors or relatives of ambassadors can be very rich while they sell the items they have collected throughout their stay in abroad. In these cases along with dealers, antique and second hand book sellers and some insider collectors are also invited.

Dealers have a key importance in the circulation system. The first radical change in the meaning of the object from a personal belonging to a commodity is established by the dealer's purchase. Sontag points that, "each photograph is only a fragment, its moral and emotional weight depends on where it is inserted. A photograph changes according to the context in which it is seen" (106). In this sense, dealers are the corner stands in the process of the transition of photograph's meaning. They are the threshold point between the personal and the public meaning of a photograph. The personal belongings of a family starts to lose its personal value and begins to gain a collecting value at this stage. As Sontag says; "each of these situations suggests a different use for the photographs but none can secure their meaning" (106). By the purchase of the dealer, the family photographs' journey in the domain of collecting starts.

After the purchase, dealers categorize materials according to the demand and the characteristic of the store it can be displayed. They scatter items to domains that they can gain a value. Some may go to second-hand book stores, some to special shops selling ephemera some may go to flea markets, some to antique shops and some directly to the collector. They transport and sell the materials.

#### **4.1.4 Private Collections and Collectors / Public Collections and Exhibitions**

There is not a specific reason for collecting. Some collectors start collecting for fun, others see it as a form of investment. When the collection grows, the drive to collect accomplishes the function of rescuing and protecting traces of the past. The photographs' vulnerability and unlikelihood to survive make them valuable for collectors. Collectors are the final stop for photographs in the market. They gather,



analyze, conserve, order, display and control the material that they collect. Photograph collecting reflects a desire to control history by images. As Sontag indicates “photography inevitably entails a certain patronizing of reality. From being “out there”, the word comes to be “inside” photographs” (80). Some collectors hide their collections some share them by writing about them or publicizing them. Making a collection of old photography is not only an adventure to the past or to other people’s lives, but also a kind of self-discovery. As “the collection is an expression of the collector”, these archives can be considered as an arena of merging stories, combining histories and times, and a collection of fragmented lives (Rickards, 30). Not only several photographs are gathered in a collection, but also the collector’s own life story is added to the whole assemble. The collector’s personality is included in the collection because individual interests and motives make collections possible in the first place.

There are unions<sup>15</sup> organizing exhibitions that allow collectors to share their collections. Some collectors may turn their private collections to public collections by establishing museums.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> An example for a union that organizes exhibitons would be, Colection Club İstanbul: “*Geçmişe Davetlisiniz Efendim I and II*”, Colection Club Ankara: “*Koleksiyonlarda Ankara Sergisi*”.

<sup>16</sup> Istanbul Toy Museum found by Sunay Akın’s own collection can be given as an example of a private collection that is turned to a public exhibition.



**Figure 6.** Hand-colored photograph collection of Yusuf Murat Şen. Displayed in the exhibition *Geçmişe Davettisiniz Efendim II*, organized by Collection Club, İstanbul (3-13 December 2004).

As a result we can divide the journey of a photograph into two parts: its journey in private sphere and its journey in public domain. The photograph's journey in private sphere starts as a slice of memory. It is a personal belonging in the hands of the owner. When it is separated from its owner, its value diminishes. Trash status is the bottom line for personal photographs. On the other hand, garbage is the starting point for photographs in the second part of their journey. Photographs might gain a new value if they are found and rescued from the rubbish. The journey of thrown away photographs in the public sphere starts from the bottom (from the garbage), but they become more valuable as time passes and the gap between the time captured and the time viewed increases.

#### 4.1.5 When the Photograph Returns: The Moment of Confrontation

Every antique shop and flea market is itself an immense collection whose items are on sale. Every item scattered in such spaces is separated from its “original” context and re-framed within a new context. However, every distinctive item has its own trajectories, own historical and memorial past that makes it unique and contains an “aura”. Beside old furniture, vintage music albums, honor medals, tin cigarette boxes, maps, carpets or jewelries etc. one other collection item that one may encounter in such places are is photographs. Among all photographs that might be found in the antique market, I believe “dispossessed family photographs” and albums have a peculiar place because they have a dairy like feature. They narrate a story about the people in the photographs.



**Figure 7.** A “dispossessed family photograph” album purchased from a second-hand book store at Kadıköy District, İstanbul

Photograph albums are like a visual diary of its owner. Because of their diary like feature, they provide a telling example of revealing the intimate. The family photographs found in the market have paradoxical nature. Their quality is determined by their

anonymous status. Family photographs / albums are meant to exist in personal domain instead of being objects sold in the public sphere. Photograph albums are memorial keepsakes for personal histories of families. They are meant to be passed from generation to generation for telling the story of a family. “Dispossessed albums” however, lack these qualities. The photographs they contain become unidentified. In the case of “dispossessed family photographs” that are circulating in antique markets, the privacy of family life is lost, since photographs are exhibited to strangers. When such a personal object loses its original context and gains an exchange value, its quality changes and it becomes an object that is in contradiction with itself. The paradox here mainly arises from the change they undergo from being a personal, intimate memory object to an antique object and commodity exchanged in public sphere.

For Barthes a photograph is actually in essence not a memory but rather a “counter-memory”, since it blocks memory (91). Photography is just an image, while memory is a complex multi-sensual mechanism. According to Barthes “the photography is violent: not because it shows violent things, but because on each occasion “it fills the sight by force” and because in it nothing can be refused or transformed” (91). He continues by saying that the only way to transform the photograph is “into refuse: either the drawer or the wastebasket” (93). In this sense, it is interesting to ask what happens when refused photographs come back and catch the subject.

The idea of a thrown family album in the garbage is interesting. But the idea that actually they are not disappearing and items from the garbage start to gain a marketing value is more unusual. The above mentioned paradoxical nature of “dispossessed family

photographs” reveals themselves when a “dispossessed family photograph” loses its anonymity and gets recognized by a family member. There are several anecdotes that sellers tell about the specific moment when a customer recognize someone s/he knows in the bunch of “dispossessed photographs”. Every seller tells this story as if what s/he encountered was a miracle. They all attribute a sense of uniqueness to the event they have witnessed. Actually, indeed such occasions are not so rare. Half of sellers/collectors that participated in the interviews (six out of twelve) had one story like this. One seller from Ankara tells his story by starting his words via indicating the uniqueness of the moment and explains his excitement as follows:

That moment is unique! They just came all of a sudden in the evening. I am waiting for a friend. They asked, “Could we have a look”. “Yes” I replied. They were going through our photos. I was just thinking when the woman cried. I was afraid. I wondered if anything had happened. She was touched, her eyes filled with tears. Photos, she was looking if there were any other, she got one of them and she hugged. This is my uncle's photo, said she. She showed him. This is him she said because this was a group photo. They were photos of the National Assembly, the man was her uncle, she hadn't that photo, and her family didn't have too many photos.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ülger, Fuat. 08.12.2004, “Kıvrıcık Usta Antika ve Dekorasyon”, Pirinçhan Samanpazarı - Ankara. (See the original quotation in local language in appendix C1)

The flash of recognition is the climax of this issue. Because it is the instant the perfect circulation system is challenged and breaks into pieces. This is the moment that all conflicts dissolve. This is the moment that every value and the whole antique sector are put under question. Because at this moment, besides all the new meanings attached to the photograph, real memories come to the light. It is the moment when the photograph returns to its “original” context and finds its “original” meaning. It is like the moment of encounter with the hero of the albums. Another anecdote from another seller starts like a story:

One day, before owning a shop about 9-10 years before, I was street selling on Still Street, and I had a box of such photos, I was selling them. Again, a young woman was going through the photos and she came up her grandmother's photo. She was surprised. I, too, was very happy, because I was the cause for it. This happens sometimes, even rarely, they happen from time to time.<sup>18</sup>

These kinds of encounters are like a shock both for the seller and to the customer. The realization that actually items that are thrown away to the garbage may not actually be destroyed and disappear, is striking for the family members who find them. An anecdote of a seller, Ahmet Yüksel, is about that recognition.

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<sup>18</sup> Yılmazoğlu, Bahadır. 04.12.2004, “Rocinante Art Gallery”, Çukurcuma- İstanbul. . (See the original quotation in local language in appendix C2)

A: This happened some time in the past. We were selling a man's letters in an auction. His child came up and asked angrily "how could you sell my mother's letters". "We can sell them" we answered "what is it to you". He said, this is my mother. His mother was this woman Arıburun, a Democrat Party member of the parliament who has been tried by the Supreme Court. "I will file a lawsuit against you" so-and-so. We asked, "Did you lose these or something?" "No I didn't". "Well, was it a burglary?" "No." "So what did you do?" "We threw them away." Look, you have thrown them away but nothing you throw away goes into garbage! Scrap dealers on the streets take them and bring them to us. We take the useful ones from among them. Remaining ones go to SEKA (paper recycle center). Then, we said this is like finding pearls in the garbage, there is one rooster who has found a pearl in the garbage. There are people doing this. So, some things are recovered from being lost. Then, the man was convinced.

P: Did he buy it then?

A: No... No, he didn't. Some other people purchased it.

P: He has thrown it away.

A: He even doesn't know why. He understands that it is something important after I mention this in my catalogue. Otherwise, he doesn't know whether it is important or not. He has no knowledge. They will throw them away, than fell sorry.

P: It is very interesting that something that could be thrown away in the garbage is valuable to some others.

A: Of course, you find most of them in the garbage. Would he sell it if he knew its value? No he won't. But he may throw it away. When he throws them away, the scrap dealer collects them. Some of them know this better. He brings it and sells it to us, considering it will be of use and make money. The man makes his living from this. I mean this is his job. So we protect many things from getting lost in this manner.<sup>19</sup>

As there is not an agreement between the sides for putting photographs on sale and as the meaning of photographs are very different for sides the meeting subverts the established antique market system.



**Figure 8.** Waste scrap gatherers that are selling their collections in the flea market of İtfaiye Meydanı, Ankara (16.01.2005).

<sup>19</sup> Yüksel, Ahmet. 13.12.2004, "Sanat Kitabevi", Karanfil Street. Kızılay- Ankara. (See the original quotation in local language in appendix C3)



Waste-scrap paper gatherers basically know what can be valuable and what is nowadays collected in the market. They decide which ones will continue their journey towards the collectors, and which ones will disappear forever and go back to its starting point by recycling. One of the major sources for collecting domain is the rubbish.



**Figure 9.** Waste scrap gatherers that are selling their collections in the flea market of İskitler, Ankara (16.01.2005).

Barthes indicates the mortality of photographs. They are born, age and die like living organisms. For Barthes, when the photograph is “attacked by light, by humidity it fades, weakens, vanishes” and “there is nothing left to do but throw it away” (94). However, the transformation of photographs does not always finish in the way that he describes since there might be another process that photographs might undergo in the antiques market.

#### **4.2 FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SELLERS AND COLLECTORS: DISPOSSESSED FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS AS “SPECTRAL IMAGES”**

The concept of “spectral images” is used in this thesis to refer and emphasize “spectral” aspect of “dispossessed family photographs” circulating in antique shops and markets in Turkey. The word “specter” originates from the Latin word “spectrum”. The term has mainly two interrelated meanings: “a visible ghost; an apparition” and “a haunting fear; the treat of something unpleasant”<sup>20</sup>. The first meaning of the term invokes the physical appearance of old photographs that are faded and pale.



**Figure 10.** A “dispossessed photograph” that is on sale in the flea market of İskitler (16.01.2005).

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<sup>20</sup> Allen, Robert. *Chambers encyclopedic English dictionary*, Edinburgh: Chambers, 1994

The term “specter” also resonates with their vague and indefinite conceptualization in the market. These photographs appear in the context of the present with their untraceable pasts. They circulate in the market carrying images of the past like ghosts. They exist, but their meaning is elusive and indeterminate. Seeing photographs is not always enough to comprehend them. A tactile contact is also necessary to sense their unique “aura”. The second meaning of the word “specter”, “a haunting fear; the treat of something unpleasant” in other words, “a frightening image or idea”<sup>21</sup> reveals the disturbing side of these photographs. The concept of “spectral image” describes dispossessed photographs’ mysterious quality. They are thrown away memories.

This chapter is devoted to the discussion of the question that how “dispossessed family photographs” are regarded, perceived and defined by sellers/collectors at the antique market. How do they name these nameless and anonymous images? How does the meaning of these old photographs constantly shift in their discourse? What makes these images so special, extraordinary but at the same time weird and uncanny?

#### **4.2.1 The failing categorization system and madness of “dispossessed family photographs”**

The defining characteristics of photography as discussed by Barthes in *Camera Lucida* can be observed in deeper level in “dispossessed family photographs”. For Barthes the “*noeme*” of photograph appears in its complex relation to time and death. The questions of “time” and “death” are even more relevant to the case of “dispossessed family

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<sup>21</sup> *BBC English Dictionary: A Dictionary for the World*. London: BBC English and Harper Collins Publishers, 1992.

photographs” circulating in the antique market. In this section, first I will present an overview of categorization systems used in the antique market for the placement of “dispossessed family photographs”. Then, I will try to disclose how these systems of categorization constitute the meaning of photography itself in relation Barthes’ understanding of “time” and “death”.

Collecting is about inventing systems of classification and ordering objects around essentially infinite number of criteria. Collections are typically formed on the basis of the collector’s area of interest and gain value on the basis of their availability in the market. Photographs are regarded as unique collection pieces and this makes them gain a key value in the antique market. Barthes suggests that “what the Photograph reproduces to infinity has occurred only once: the Photograph repeats what could never be repeated existentially” (4). This observation holds true for all photographs but it is even stronger in old ones as there is a huge gap between the “photographic time” and the “viewing time” in the case of old photographs. Korkut Erkan, an ephemera seller from Ankara, describes this quality of old photographs as follows:

(...) items sold by these sellers are generally *unique* ones. For example, you come and asked for the family album made by the provincial officer, saying that you are a district governor. I keep that for three generations. You no longer have the chance to find such an album. Price is of no

concern there, purchasing power of the person and the price that the seller will want to get, are revealed. This has no limits.<sup>22</sup>

As the possibility to find a specific photograph album that belongs to a certain period and to a certain family is very low, collectors and sellers consider such old objects as unique. “Uniqueness” of the object is the prime motive in collecting and selling old photographs no matter what the theme of the collection is.

Among various themes of collecting, one can observe three general categories in antique markets in Turkey: (1) collecting examples of early photograph technologies; (2) collecting photographs about public life; (3) and collecting photographs about daily life. Collecting samples of early photograph technologies is about gathering older forms of photograph technology. This can be about collecting cased images (i.e., daguerreotypes, ambrotypes and tintypes) or photographs on paper (e.g., calotypes, albumen prints, cartes de visities, cabinet cards and stereographs). There are several criteria that change the value of the photograph like the condition of the piece, the date, the content, figures in the image, the size, the shape of the case, marks, stamps, labels, patents, the material of the album or the case, the famous photographer or the photograph studio etc. (Mace).

Photograph collecting in Turkey is mainly based on the second category that is, collecting public life scenes. This category has two sub-genres: Exterior scenery

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<sup>22</sup> Erkan, Korkut. 7. 12. 2004, “Eski Zaman Sanat ve Kültür Merkezi”, Aynalı Çarşı Passage, Tunali Street Ankara. (See the original quotation in local language in appendix C4)

photographs and photographs about historical / political events and periods. Collecting exterior scenery is generally about finding photographs, photo cards or postcards of urban space. For an exterior scenery collector, it is important to be able to identify where the photograph had been taken, since what is important for the collector is mostly to gather images of a specific place. In this mode of collecting, the background and the overall situation described are valued while, human figures in front of the camera are considered to be irrelevant in determining the photograph's value. The criteria that determine the value are quantity and the rarity of the photograph; the mark or stamp of the photographer / the editor; and the period and the space that the photograph was taken. The first criterion, quality and rarity, is about whether the image is a photograph, photo card or postcard.<sup>23</sup> Third criterion the mark of an editor or the photographer of the post card is a very influential factor in determining the photograph's value. Postcards may have an editor or not. If there is, their value increases. Forth criterion is the space and time of photography. The older the photograph gets the valuable it becomes since the possibility of finding older photographs in a good condition is harder. Also, sometimes photographs gain value since they depict something that no longer exists. For example, photographs depicting old Ankara are valuable, because they act as a proof of the past. Collectors would also be gathering images of their hometowns where they have memories.

The second subgenre of public life photography is about historical / political events and periods. Collections in this category focus on specific historical periods like the Turkish

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<sup>23</sup> If there is only one copy or few copies, it is called a photograph. If the photograph has fifty reproductions, then it is called a photo card, if more than fifty copies are reproduced it is called post card.

War of Independence and *Atatürk* or important and famous figures like politicians and artists. These collections do not include any private photographs of ordinary people. Such albums act as documentations of public history therefore; they are generally preserved as a whole and sold with high prices. Albums about a political or military activity or an activity of a public or charity foundation (like the opening fest of the railway stations or the life in military school) can be considered as examples to this category.

The third category in old photograph collecting focuses on daily life. The interest in this category is currently on a rise in Turkey but it is still not as common as collecting public life photographs. Collecting daily life photographs is generally made either by concentrating on categories (studio portraits, famous photographers etc.) or themes (fashion, toys and children etc.). These thematic collections generally bring light on a certain part of social history. In this way, ordinary family photographs gain a value. Photography can work to inform. For example, how was the fashion of a certain period like? Photography's ability to present historical data is what makes these collections valuable. Unlike public photography collecting, in the case of daily life photography, ordinary human figures might be important for the collector depending on the theme of the collection. When put together, these photographs may display a picture of the past on a specific theme. Photographs gain more value when they are included in a collection together with other items in a set. Some photograph collectors gather images of objects that they are interested in like cars, clothes etc. Photographs that are considered as antique also have a collecting value. For example one may make a collection of old toys. In that occasion photographs depicting old toys in a domestic space can also be included

in the whole compilation. Daily life photographs are collected and valued, then, also because they include items that are not in use in society anymore. Collectors may not make a collection of objects themselves, but images of them.

In antique markets of Turkey, one can say that old photographs are classified, valued and sold depending on these three criteria. Photographs that do not fit into any of these categories are generally treated as ordinary collecting pieces. They are not considered to be valuable. They are sold at minor prices. They are not cared for. They are usually stored in boxes altogether without getting categorized. The broad range of interests allows every object of public and daily life to become a collection piece one day. Even very personal objects may gain a collection value one day. However, the classification system of photographs in the antique market is not broad enough to classify every single image to a separate category. There are many photographs for which the categorization system fails. Determining the exchange value of these photographs is also difficult. One photograph may be very valuable for a collector and could be a trash for another.

Meanings attached to the classified photographs are clear. They are in the service of the antique market as they are circulating between collectors and sellers on the basis of an established system. Their value and meaning is definite. So, what are meanings clustered around the simple ordinary family photographs that are circulating in the market without any name?





**Figure 11.** “Dispossessed family photographs” that are on sale in an antique shop in Samanpazarı District, Ankara (14.12.2004).

The unclassifiable “dispossessed family photographs” are hard to define. There is not a definite name they have or a common description they entail in the antique market. Every member of the market perceives them differently. Bahadır Yılmazoğlu a seller from Istanbul, Çukurcuma indicates their anonymous quality by saying: “In fact they are unidentified. Unidentified, I mean, they are unknown people now”.<sup>24</sup> Another seller, Fuat Ülger, calls them “photographs that are lacking spirituality”. He answers the question of ‘how would you name these photographs’ as follows:

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<sup>24</sup> Yılmazoğlu, Bahadır. 04.12.2004, “Rocinante Art Gallery”, Çukurcuma, İstanbul. (See the original quotation in local language in appendix C5)

What first came into my mind is... I would say these are photos without spirituality and without owners. Because if they had spirituality, they would not have been here. We have family albums too. Altogether in an album... If I think that one day they will fall into others' hands and that they cannot be left to our children, I will tear them, and throw them away myself.<sup>25</sup>

These “dispossessed family photographs” can not be easily named and defined even by people selling them. They do not suit in any category. They are not culturally coded in the market which allows them to fit into a mental image. Despite this situation, one can observe that there is an effort in the market to fit “dispossessed family photographs” in a pattern, to classify and label them. So, how can we explain this effort? Why does this effort always fail in “dispossessed family photographs”? How do these photographs resist to be classified?

In *Camera Lucida*, Barthes claims that the essence of photography lies in its hysterical relation to time and its intimate relation to death. The photograph is the evidence of the subject’s presence at a specific time and place in the past. No one can claim the opposite as the photograph acts as a proof of it. Barthes calls this “that-has-been” quality of the photograph. Every photograph is a proof of “that-has-been”. At the same time, however, every photograph also verifies the complete pastness of the depicted moment. One is on

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<sup>25</sup> Ülger, Fuat. 08.12.2004, “Kıvrıkcık Usta Antika ve Dekorasyon”, Pirinçhan Samanpazarı - Ankara. (See the original quotation in local language in appendix C6)

the one hand sure that the subject has been there on the other hand, however, that the moment has already over / dead. In this sense, for Barthes every photograph indicates one's future death. The photograph is both evidence of something happened in the past and simultaneously a claim for the future (you are going to die). Barthes points out that the pastness of the moment and "that-has-been" quality of photographs is clearest in historical photographs because "there is always a defeat of Time in them: that is dead and that is going to die" (96). Death is the "*eidōs*" and "that-has-been" is the "*noēme*" of photograph. Therefore, for Barthes there is a close relation between madness and photography. The complex relation of the photograph to time and death also connects it to madness.

Photography as a "bizarre *medium*" "is false on the level of perception" as the moment is gone, "true on the level of time (...)" as it is a photograph captured in the past. According to Barthes, photography is a mad image because of its paradoxical relation to time and its claim about the inevitable death of subjects in the future. In this context, Barthes observes that in order to reduce and eliminate the madness of photography, societies domesticate it. There are two ways in taming the photograph's mad aspect. First is to consider photography in the domain of art. When photograph is considered as a piece of art, its essence of "that-has-been" is forgotten. The photograph without its "that-has-been" quality is mute. It can not be disturbing anymore. The second way of taming is to generalize photographs in such a way that they can not emphasize their madness anymore. Barthes explains it in these words; "to generalize, to gregarize, banalize it until it is no longer confronted by the image in relation to which it can mark itself, assert its special character, its scandal, its madness" (118). One can observe a

similar situation in relation to “dispossessed family photographs” as well. “That-has-been” quality of photographs is more emphasized in old photographs, therefore the system of collecting functions to eliminate their madness more drastically. The antique market uses the categorization system in order to tame old photographs. Old disposed photographs are categorized and assigned value in two extreme ways. First, they are valued and turned out to be unique representations of the past and made collection pieces that are stored carefully in special albums and exhibited like art pieces with high prices. When old photographs are regarded as collection pieces and fitted into certain categories, their “that-has-been” quality gets silenced. Sellers and collectors tend to see only the criteria that make them valuable collection items.



**Figure 12.** “Dispossessed family photographs” preserved in special albums that lengthen their life-span. *Erhun Hiçyılmaz Antika* Beyoğlu District, Istanbul (04.12.2004).

In the second way of taming, photographs that are uncategorizable are regarded as banal, invaluable, common representations of ordinary families stored in boxes carelessly. As they do not fit into any category which would allow them to be a collection item, they are degraded.



**Figure 13.** An exhibition box for “dispossessed family photographs” of a second hand book store in Çukurcuma District, Istanbul (04.12.2004).

These two acts eliminate the uneasiness or “madness” in Barthes words that “dispossessed family photographs” might generate.

In order to be able to sell and collect photographs, in order to legitimize the circulation system used, taming the photographs’ madness is important. Banal photographs depicting personal moments are hard to categorize. Collectors or sellers search for an

indication of public importance at the back cover of a photograph, or a famous figure, a stamp or a mark of the photographer and so on. Once it is categorized, it is purified from personal background it carries, because now it is a collection piece ready to be included in a new meaning system. Categorization makes a photograph to gain a new meaning (collecting value). This new meaning gained in the collecting domain allows the seller and collector to legitimize their trade. Without any categorization, there is not a reasonable explanation for selling personal family photographs. Cataloguing photographs makes the shift from personal to public easier.

#### **4.2.2 Sensing “dispossessed family photographs”**

The above mentioned categorization system is used in order to keep the circulation system going on. However, in personal discourses of sellers and collectors, one can find several points revealing the paradoxical side of this system. “Dispossessed family photographs” circulation in the antique market is nameless. However, there are some common feelings and ideas clustered around them. They create similar associations among sellers/collectors. Same expressions are used about them. The subtle attitude of members in relation to these photographs, reveal the paradoxical side of the antique market as a whole.

What is sensed by antique sellers and collectors is always subjective. They all have special photographs with which they have a special relationship. For Barthes:

Absolute subjectivity is achieved only in a state, an effort of silence (shutting your eyes is to make the image speak in silence). The

photograph touches me if I withdraw it from its usual blah-blah:

“Technique,” “Reality”, “Reportage,” “Art” etc.: to say nothing, to shut my eyes, to allow the detail to rise of its own accord into affective consciousness. (55)

Depending on this observation one can say that in the antique market when the categorization system fails, “dispossessed family photographs” start to talk using the discourse of antique sellers and collector. In the discourse of sellers and collectors, one can observe the following common points: a sense of melancholy in relation to photographs; a sense of uneasiness in relation to the “*eidōs*” of photography that is, its relation to death. In the following sections I will focus on these common points separately. First, I will discuss what melancholy associated with “dispossessed family photographs” in the discourse of sellers means in relation to Barthes’ concept of “*punctum*” and “*studium*”. Later, I will discuss how death is so much intrigued in these photographs.

#### **4.2.2.1 The sense of melancholy**

Collecting “dispossessed family photographs” is radically different from other modes of collecting. Photographs are special objects. They are not only images but also representations of lived experience. For Barthes, photography is different from other systems of representation because it “carries its referent with itself” (5). It is impossible to differentiate the referent from the photograph. This also makes photograph collecting different from other modes of collecting. Photographs entail lived memories of real people. So, the collector not only collects photographs as a commodity, but s/he also



possesses other people's mementos. According to Barthes, posing is the moment which turns subjects into objects. Through posing, the subject feels that s/he is becoming an object; an image on a piece of paper. He defines this experience of transformation as "a micro version of death" (14). For him "photography transformed subject into object, and even, one might say, into a museum object" (13).<sup>26</sup> Barthes points to the close relation between the photography and its referent again and again. He argues that the photograph and its referent are "are glued together" (6). This intimacy makes it hard to consider the image as an object. Therefore, the photograph itself becomes invisible. Rather than seeing the photographic object, one tends to recognize the referent. The close relation between the photograph and its referent is also observed by members of antique market and affect the way they perceive photographs. In this sense, generally, in the antique market "dispossessed family photographs" are regarded as alive by sellers and collectors. For example Halil Bingöl, a second-handbook seller says "speaking of old photos, these are all living, books are living, and photos are living".<sup>27</sup> Halil Bingöl has a special relationship with objects he is selling. He even talks with photographs. He describes his dialogs with photographs as follows:

We talk to them, and share our feelings with them. We take it and put  
them it to somewhere, it says I am not attracting customers here, and we

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<sup>26</sup> In relation to the essence of collecting, the phrase "museum object" used by Barthes, is important. The presence of the collectors that are gathering old photographs makes the objectification of the subjects more intensified. Posing is the subtle moment that turns the subjects in to objects, but the existence of the collectors that demand these special image/objects from the market, turns the objects to "museums objects". In the hand of the collector or seller, the photographs gain new values and ordered, catalogued and may be exhibited in different contexts likewise a "museum object" in a shop window, or in an exhibition hall.

<sup>27</sup> Bingöl, Halil. 04.12.2004, "Barış Kitabevi" Aslıhan Passage, Galatasaray – İstanbul. (See original quotation in local language in appendix C7)



put it here and we sell them. (...) What am I telling to you? I am telling that they are living. Would you buy something without any relationship? Without loving something? There is a kind of relationship between you and the photograph.<sup>28</sup>

Similarly Erhun Hiçyılmaz from Istanbul has an interesting relation with photographs. He regards them as part of his family. For him, they start to live again when they are saved from trash bins.

They are items left without any owners. Therefore, these items without owners get the chance of living again. (...) I mean I could define them all as my family. I mean we live here together.<sup>29</sup>

Generally sellers and collectors express their sadness for families whose photographs are circulating in the market. Erhun Hiçyılmaz for example describes his shop as a “place of sorrow”.

Sometimes, these (photos) are sources of melancholy. You become melancholic when you look and see these people in them. At times, this is a place of melancholy. You would wish you had gone back but perhaps you wouldn't wish you were the same person in that photo. You

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<sup>28</sup> Bingöl, Halil. 04.12.2004, “Barış Kitabevi” Aslıhan Passage, Galatasaray – İstanbul. (See original quotation in local language in appendix C8)

<sup>29</sup> Hiçyılmaz, Erhun. 04.12.2004, “Erhun Hiçyılmaz Antika”, Beyoğlu - İstanbul. (See original quotation in local language in appendix C9)

wouldn't wish you were like him or her. So, what is in this album is full of melancholy. Nobody could actually say that the life in it was a cheerful one. (...) If, in the end, it is here, then this connotes that it has come here after passing a torrent of melancholy.<sup>30</sup>

Generally the expression of “falling to antique shop” (*antikacıya düşmek*) is commonly used regarding family photographs. Collectors and shop owners perceive these photographs as biographies that had unfortunately ended in the market. Even using the phrase “falling” (*düşmek*) discloses a sense of melancholy attributed to these photographs. Apart from sadness, a kind of regret and pity can also be sensed in the discourse of sellers and collectors. For İlhan Şimşek sadness occurs when photographs are thrown away without respecting memories. He says: “This is in fact very melancholic”.<sup>31</sup> Considering photographs as representations of subjects, Halil Bingöl says, pointing to a box full of “dispossessed family photographs”, “there are dead lives here... exhausted, extinguished lives, past lives.”<sup>32</sup> Sellers and collectors know that photographs come to the market as a result of discarding. The mental image of personal photographs in trash cans disturbs them most. Celal Öztürk expresses his sadness like this:

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<sup>30</sup> Hiçyılmaz, Erhun. 04.12.2004, “Erhun Hiçyılmaz Antika”, Beyoğlu - İstanbul. (See original quotation in local language in appendix C10)

<sup>31</sup> Şimşek, İlhan. 7. 12. 2004. “Babil Antika”, Ertuğ Passage, Tunalı Street – Ankara. (See original quotation in local language in appendix C11)

<sup>32</sup> Bingöl, Halil. 04.12.2004, “Barış Kitabevi” Aslıhan Pasajı, Galatasaray – İstanbul (See original quotation in local language in appendix C12)

They come here from the flea market, that is to say, from trash. I mean, there is an occurrence of throwing into the trash container. This is what makes us melancholic. (...) that is to say, the whole life of a man is put into trash container. Very sad.<sup>33</sup>

İsmail İlbey a seller in Istanbul feels this sadness in an intensified way and tries to protect familys' honor by not selling very personal photographs. He throws away photographs that do not suit to his ethic values. He somehow tries to care for the uncared photographs.

There are private photographs even between pages of new books that come to us. You know, we all put some things, money and photos between pages of books. When I encounter those photos, I destroy them immediately. They might be still living, and still known. I mean, I definitely tear them to make sure that they (photographs) are not around. No matter where the place is. In fact, I tear them generally because they are new photos. (...) I don't put them with photos even if they are of value.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Öztürk, Celal. 14.12.2004, "Gökyüzü Sanat", Samanpazarı - Ankara. (See original quotation in local language in appendix C13)

<sup>34</sup> İlbey, İsmail. 04.12.2004, "Ayça Kitapevi", Aslıhan Passage, Galatasaray – İstanbul. (See original quotation in local language in appendix C14)

The sense of melancholy associated with “dispossessed family photographs” grows when photographs are paired with other personal belongings of families. There are many albums constructed by owners like diaries. Beside photographs, the addition of an inscription or a memory item turns the album into a personal keepsake.



**Figure 14.** Photo albums, a wedding photo-card and a diary which are purchased from different antique markets in Turkey.

Fuat Ülger another seller questions himself about selling personal belongings of families and expresses his sadness: “In fact, this is sad and makes me sad when I see those photos being sold. Everything could be sold, but should we sell photos, letters, and postcards? But they have buyers”.<sup>35</sup> Words of the owner that are found along with the photograph may change the meaning of the image. Getting access to the inner world of a stranger by reading his/her diary and looking at his/her photographs is like a kind of voyeurism since it is done without the consent of the owner. This voyeuristic aspect of gazing other people’s lives through their lost belongings is expressed by some of sellers/collectors.

Isn't there a feeling of wonder here? Here, there is wonder of a person's private life, and penetrating a man's privacy. Surely, this is what happens. Of course, every one could make this. What is secret and protected will attract more attention.<sup>36</sup>

For Güner Soydemir, a collector and seller from Ankara, what makes family photograph albums interesting is the act of voyeurism itself.

For instance, penetrating one's privacy. Every human being has voyeurism in it. You can control this in your life. I think every human being has all sorts of feelings (...) these are sorts of voyeurism, for example watching a nude woman from a keyhole, or a woman watching

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<sup>35</sup> Ülger, Fuat. 08.12.2004, “Kıvırcık Usta Antika ve Dekorasyon”, Pirinçhan Samanpazarı - Ankara. (See original quotation in local language in appendix C15)

<sup>36</sup> Yüksel, Ahmet. 13.12.2004, “Sanat Kitabevi”, Karanfil Street. Kızılay- Ankara (See original quotation in local language in appendix C16)

a man. But, watching a family life is more attractive. I think this is as effective as seeing a sexual object, and seeing a nude woman or man.<sup>37</sup>

Seeing family photographs in trash, selling personal belongings of a stranger, penetrating one's privacy by gazing at a photo album also creates an apologetic tone on the part of sellers. In this sense, there is also a sense of uneasiness and confusion about “dispossessed family photographs”. In order to overcome this prevailing hesitation of selling personal family photographs and maybe feeling of guilt, categorization system is used. Antique sellers try not to regard these images as personal family photographs in order to be able to sell them. Ahmet Yüksel tries to see those collecting pieces without any personal detail and says: “they are no more private. I mean, they are no more private after such a long time. They are something else. They become pieces in a collection. This is a micro historiography”.<sup>38</sup> Pointing to the loss of privacy after death occurs, another seller says: “They don't have personalities as their owners are not alive anymore, and persons in them don't have personalities any more as they are dead”.<sup>39</sup> Sellers try not to personalize photographs. They try not to be subjective while selling strangers' photographs. This impersonal approach is only a way for them to protect their own feelings and to be able to sell these photographs. For instance, in our interview about this subject, Halil Bingöl contradicted with himself. At the beginning of our

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<sup>37</sup> Soydemir, Güner. 13.12.2004, Çelikler İş Hanı Passage, Tunalı Street- Ankara. (See original quotation in local language in appendix C17)

<sup>38</sup> Yüksel, Ahmet. 13.12.2004, “Sanat Kitabevi”, Karanfil Street. Kızılay- Ankara (See original quotation in local language in appendix C18)

<sup>39</sup> Yılmazoğlu, Bahadır. 04.12.2004, “Rocinante Art Gallery”, Çukurcuma- İstanbul. (See original quotation in local language in appendix C19)

conversation, as soon as I used the phrase “personal family photographs” he rejected my term and corrected me by saying: “of course, we don't take this as personal family photographs. We perceive them as old photographs”.<sup>40</sup> However, later on in the conversation, his impersonal attitude towards photographs has disappeared. Several times he indicated the special relation he has with photographs and books he is selling. (See appendix A for the full text of the interview in local language. See appendix B for the English translation).

Antique sellers consider “dispossessed family photographs” as documentation of the past that bring light into a period of time. But when this effort to classify images fails, photographs begin to create a disturbing effect. This is the moment the “madness” of photograph reveals itself. There is nothing distressing in selling space post cards or photo cards of cities. The more they get old the valuable they get. But when it comes to selling “dispossessed family photographs”, the topic becomes irritating and the madness of the photograph becomes visible.

In *Camera Lucida*, Barthes writes about the founding orders of photography: the “*studium*” and the “*punctum*”. “*Studium*” derives from culture which is a kind of educational knowledge that is culturally coded. The “*punctum*” on the other hand is the accident in the photo that pricks and pierces the eye. It is the unintentional detail, the hole in the photo that catches the eye and “fills the whole picture” (45). It is what breaks

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<sup>40</sup> Bingöl, Halil. 04.12.2004, “Barış Kitabevi” Aslıhan Passage, Galatasaray – İstanbul. (See original quotation in local language in appendix C20)

the “*studium*”. “The *studium* is always coded, the *punctum* is not” (51). In the context of the antique domain, one can say that, efforts to classify the “dispossessed family photographs” are an effort to fit photographs to the domain of “*studium*”. On the other hand, the uncoded subtle details that are not clearly disclosed but can be observed in discourses of sellers/collectors remind one the “*punctum*” effect of the photograph. To name, to label, to classify are functions related to the domain of “*studium*”. Inability to name and categorize “dispossessed family photographs” on the other hand, makes their relation with the domain of the “*studium*” uneasy. Barthes, explaining how “*punctum*” and “*studium*” work, indicates that “what I can name cannot really prick me” (51). Naming something means that it is, culturally coded and defined. The ones that are named do not disturb the “*spectator*” as it easily fits into already established mental categories. Similarly a family photo album at private domain that has the surname of the family it belongs would not produce a disturbing effect. Barthes continues “the incapacity to name is a good symptom of disturbance” (51). Being unable to name creates an uneasy feeling because it reveals that one does not know what it is. The unknown is always avoided. “Dispossessed family photographs” that have shifting meanings can be considered rather in relation to the domain of “*punctum*” that does not need language to operate. “*Punctum*” is about a subjective experience. The albums circulate in antique shops lose their name and become anonymous images of anonymous families. There is not an agreement about where these “dispossessed family photographs” belong.



It is hard to define “dispossessed family photographs” that have an untraceable past. But referring to the original idea under the practice of creating family albums, the changing quality of the state of such photographs can be described. In the order of social life, family photographs are cultural texts and cultural constructions of the family. According to Kuhn “in the process of using – producing, selecting, ordering, displaying – photographs, the family is actually in the process of making itself” (19). Cultural norms are reinforced in the process of arranging family photographs in an album. In the organization of private life there are invisible social constraints that form individuals. This force is defined through the concept of “screen” by Kaja Silverman. “Screen” is the “culturally generated image or repertoire of images through which subjects are not only constituted, but differentiated in relation to class, race, sexuality, age and nationality” (135). Therefore, family photographs can be seen as a self formation of families or individuals according to the “screen”. Photo albums are a personal practice of creating an identity which alters page by page, photo by photo as a reflection of people’s lives confirmed by the social gaze. The camera when felt like a gaze upon the subject, is a medium which forces people to act according to the society’s rules. “When we feel the social gaze focused upon us, we feel photographically framed. However, the converse is also true: when a real camera is trained upon us, we feel ourselves subjectively constituted, as if the resulting photograph could somehow determine “who” we are” (Silverman 135). Posing is the moment which subjects align themselves with the gaze. Barthes describes his experience of posing as follows “now, once I feel myself observed by the lens, everything changes: I constitute myself in the process of “posing,” I instantaneously make another body of myself, I transform myself in advance into an image” (10). Every time it is posed for the camera, the subject recreates his/her ideal

image again. The resulting photo is crucial for the subject. Generally the photograph means a lot to the owner as it captured a nice memory of the flowing time in his/her life story. They are proudly shown to relatives and friends, talked about and delicately stored. If the captured moment does not suit the “image repertoire” of the “screen” then, it is not worthwhile to preserve it. Thus it is denied and possibly thrown away.

Family albums have a crucial role in representing the family’s inner harmony. As Kuhn says “the family album constructs the word of the family as a utopia” (57). The albums creates the family with a perfectionist way; happy moments, strong bonds between the family members etc. How can the family photograph albums end up in a trash bin at street? Even the mental image of a photo album in the waste seems to be disturbing? Although family photographs depict moments of perfection, their placement in the antique market “pricks” ones eyes, because they are not at home but in a store on sale (Barthes 27). According to Barthes, the co-presence of the elements that does not “belong to the same world” creates duality and contrast which make photographs adventurous and attractive. So, such a homely object’s placement in the market is the accident of the domain of antique market that “pierces” the eye (Barthes 27). As “*punctum*” and “*studium*” “is a matter of co-presence” one can regard the condition of family photographs that are found in the antique market as the “*punctum*” that breaks the “*studium*” of ideal family photograph (Barthes 42). This paradoxical situation of “dispossessed family photographs” is clearly stated by a seller from Ankara asked to identify these photographs, he said: “We can name them in two ways. One, vanishing of memories... Two, revival of memories... But, those destroying memories are the owners

of these memories and those trying to revive them are strangers.”<sup>41</sup> The fact that family photographs are thrown away and then, rescued from the trash by strangers is in conflict with the representation of an ideal family. The unlikely placement of family photographs in antique markets is the unintentional detail functions like a hole that catches the eye and “fills the whole picture” of the antique market (Barthes 45). There are common reasons why these private photographs end in antique sellers. And underneath these reasons there are mostly ideas that modern society is denying or refusing to accept. Death, illness, oldness are all challenging facts that are usually kept away in modern societies. These are images that should not be depicted or included in an ideal album, since family albums are meant to produce an idealized image of the family. As Spence says; “family photographs hide any evidence of illness or ageing, since photographic conventions encourage us to ‘smile for a camera’ and lack of clarity in small images prevents us seeing fine detail” (155). Although images that are not appropriate to the “image repertoire” of the society are eliminated from albums commodity status of family albums in the antique market subverts their idealization.

#### **4.2.2.2 The sense of uneasiness**

Uncategorizable “dispossessed family photographs” always oscillate between real antiques and craps. One may encounter similar family photographs in an antique shop, a flea market or a waste paper gatherers trolley. Nothing is definite about their value and meaning. Even the perception of the photographed subject is complicated.

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<sup>41</sup> Can, Kamil. 14.12.2004, “Han Antika”, Pirinç Han, Samanpazarı – Ankara. (See original quotation in local language in appendix C21)

There is always something both appealing and distracting in them. Most antique sellers /collectors are aware that photographic subjects might have been already dead. But, even though the photographic referent is not present at the market, they are not totally absent. The photograph is a proof that they have existed in the past though they are not present at the present moment. Although they might have been dead, the presence of their photographs in the market prevents them from totally disappearing. “The photograph belongs to that class of laminated objects whose two leaves cannot be separated without destroying them both” (Barthes 6). Unless photographs themselves also disappear, these subjects continue to be present like “specters”. This gives a “spectral” quality to “dispossessed family photographs”. Barthes sees the photograph as a kind of “resurrection” as it continues to exist after the subject is gone (82). It has a life of its own in albums, on walls and, later on maybe in the antique market. Like a living organism it is born and continues to exist until the paper vanishes (Barthes 82). What creates the uncanny aspect of these photographs is the “spectral” quality of images, that is, they contain traces of the photographic referent. In this sense, staring at, possessing and selling deceased family’s photographs in the market produce an uncanny felling.



**Figure 15.** An identity booklet that is on sale in an antique shop in Samanpazarı District, Ankara (14.12.2004).

For Barthes, every photograph is an annunciation of the death of the subject. It is implicit in every photograph. Death is the *eidos* of photography (15). He suggests this relation depending on the “that-has-been” quality of photographs. Every photograph, on the one hand, proves the existence of the subject, on the other hand is an evidence of a lost moment. This pastness suggests the death of that particular instant. For Barthes, in contrast to contemporary photographs, “that-has-been” quality that makes death visible in photographs is more “vividly legible” in historical photographs (96). Barthes examines a historical photograph of two young girls in a village who are staring at a plane above them. He describes how death, in that old photograph, displays itself in these words: “how alive they are! They have their whole lives before them; but also they

are dead (today), they are then, *already* dead (yesterday)” (96). His observation about old photographs holds true in an intensified way in the case of “dispossessed family photographs” circulating in the antique market. One can observe a serious uneasiness about the “dispossessed family photographs” because of their suggestion of death. This suggestion creates an uncanny feeling on the part of collectors and sellers as they interact with these photographs frequently. Barthes takes the issue of the complex relation between photography and death further by suggesting that photographs are read in a subjective manner. He discusses another anonymous historical photograph, in which a school boy called Ernest is photographed in 1931: “it is *possible* that Ernest (...) is still alive today (but where? How? What a novel!) I am reference of every photograph, and this is what generates my astonishment in addressing myself to the fundamental question: why is it that I am alive *here and now*?” (84). In this paragraph, Barthes questions his own existence in the world while looking at an old photograph. His analysis of the photograph claims that the reference of every photograph is the “*spectator*”. Pointing to this fact, he forces the “*spectator*” to question his/her existence and non-existence along with his/her inevitable future death. In this sense, in the domain of antique market the presence of “dispossessed family photographs” intensify the photographs’ intense relation with death. Furthermore, they allow the recognition of death in a subjective manner. In this sense, another aspect of the uncanny feeling arising from “dispossessed family photographs” is that they announce to the “*spectator*” not only the death of the photographic subject but also the *spectator*’s own death. Every photograph reminds one’s own mortality. However, it becomes more emphasized in “dispossessed family photographs” as their placement in the antique market is the evidence of an already dead subject. In this context, one can observe that many

sellers/collectors in the antique market have an uncomfortable relationship with photography and their own photographs, because they feel the uncanny aspect of these “dispossessed family photographs”. Some of them feel hesitant about their own death and their own representations. As if avoiding experiencing “a micro version of death” some sellers/collectors even do not like to pose for a camera. One seller in Istanbul thinks about his own death and expresses his sadness about the “dispossessed photographs” and anxiety about his future death in these sentences:

All personal belongings are inside. You simply feel sad when you take it into your hands. I mean, if the same happens to me one day. First, I ask myself whether or not we will be discarded in this manner when we die? Surely, this will happen.<sup>42</sup>

As “dispossessed family photographs” make death in photography visible, members of the market can not avoid considering their own death. Another seller expresses his discomfort in selling “dispossessed photographs” as they remind him his own closeness to death.

When I am selling them, I say to myself that perhaps one day they will sell our photos too. Sometimes I think myself and don't have my photos taken when I am with my friends having our photos taken, because I

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<sup>42</sup> İlbey, İsmail. 04.12.2004, “Ayça Kitapevi”, Aslıhan Passage, Galatasaray – İstanbul. (See original quotation in local language in appendix C22)

immediately remember photos I sold.<sup>43</sup>

“Dispossessed family photographs” allow the “spectator” read death in photographs in a subjective manner. Another seller articulates his hesitance for posing for the camera by saying:

Whereas, you know, I rarely have my photos taken just because of this. I didn't have many photos taken because I saw such things many times. I have my children's photo, but not too many of my own.<sup>44</sup>

While announcing the death of the subject, these old photographs in the market point to one's own death. One can say that, in the domain of antique market, in the case of “dispossessed family photographs” “*punctum*” of Time is more emphasized. Barthes expresses his attraction towards photographs that “*advenes*” him in these words: “what it produces in me is the very opposite of hebetude; something more like an internal agitation, an excitement, a certain labor too, the pressure of the unspeakable which want to be spoken” (19). “Dispossessed family photographs”, as Barthes suggests seen to “want to be spoken”. These “dispossessed family photographs” reveal the unspeakable side of death more strikingly than other kinds of photographs.

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<sup>43</sup> Ülger, Fuat. 08.12.2004, “Kıvırcık Usta Antika ve Dekorasyon”, Pirinçhan Samanpazarı - Ankara. (See original quotation in local language in appendix C23)

<sup>44</sup> Şimşek, İlhan. 7. 12. 2004. “Babil Antika”, Ertuğ Passage, Tunalı Street – Ankara. (See original quotation in local language in appendix C24)



According to Barthes, ordinary / *unary* photographs can not create a “blind field” (57). However, once there is “*punctum*”, the “*spectator*” personally adds something to the photograph. Such photographs have the ability to “take the *spectator* outside its frame” (59). “*Punctum*” is the element which allows photography to create a “blind field”. Once there is “*punctum*”, a capacity to think beyond the image, that is to say the “blind field” is created. “Dispossessed family photographs” also make stronger the relation between “*punctum*” and blind field. The “*punctum*” in “dispossessed family photographs” takes the “*spectator*” outside the frame of the photograph and courage to see what is behind the image. Beyond the photograph, the family, the subjects are seen.

Barthes in *Camera Lucida* directs our attention to the modern society’s changing relation with death by introducing the concept of “flat death” (92). Modern societies’ effort to keep death out of social order results death to gain a new image outside of religion and ritual. As death can not be totally denied, a new form of symbolic death emerged. Photography has become the medium that carries this symbolic death. As Barthes suggests; “with photography, we enter into *flat Death*” (92). For Barthes, modern societies’ choice of photography to represent and counter death is striking. Early societies used monuments to make memories eternal. However, modern societies chose a mortal medium (the paper - photography) for represent death. In this context one should ask whether “spectral images” also die after saved from the trash. Members of antique market, sellers and collectors, know the answer to this question very well. In the circulation chain of photographs, first at the moment of posing the subject turns to an object and figuratively dies with the experience of a “micro version of death” (14). Then, the subject factually dies, the body disappears. Later on, the memories associated

with the subject disappear and photographs are thrown away to the trash. After photographs are found and revalued by antique sellers/collectors, their circulation in the antique market starts. They are purchased by collectors and regain various meanings in various contexts. The traces of the depicted subject's personality finally disappear when they become total collection pieces. When enough time passes for the total disappearance of the memory attached to the image, the photograph starts to die. In the antique market, there is even an expression of a "dying photograph". The expression of "photographs starts to die" and the idea that photographs also die like human beings, are pointed by a collector from the market. Korkut Erkan explains the total disappearance of the traces from a photographed subject as follows:

Photos will start to die after a period of time. Even the best-protected paper, if you do not take a very special measure, will die after 600 years. Therefore, the word ephemeral comes from here. Transient, daily, transitory... This is given in reference to the name of an insect that is born and that dies in the same day.<sup>45</sup>

The life-span of the photograph, since it is made of paper is also limited like living beings. In this sense, one can say modern societies' way of handling death is not quiet reliable.

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<sup>45</sup> Erkan, Korkut. 7. 12. 2004, "Eski Zaman Sanat ve Kültür Merkezi", Aynalı Çarşı Passage, Tunalı Streey- Ankara. (See original quotation in local language in appendix C25)

### 4.2.3 “Aura” and “Dispossessed Family Photographs”

In “A Small History” and “The Work of Art” Walter Benjamin asserts the destruction of an artwork's “aura” through its reproducibility. According to him, the new practice of film and photography in modern societies does not contain any “aura”. However, there is a special genre of photograph that still does not lose its “auratic” quality. Although exhibition value in modern age is the prevailing importance in the reception of art works, cult value resists disappearing in some specific photographs. These are ones are the early photographs. In his essay “Small History”, Benjamin attributes a magical value to old photography in contrast to painting. He comments on photographer Hill's *Newhaven fishwife* and suggests:

(...) her eyes cast down in such indolent, seductive modesty, there remains something that goes beyond testimony to the photographer's art, something that can not be silenced, that fills you with unruly desire to know what her name was, the woman was alive there, who even now is still real and will never consent to be wholly absorbed in *art*. (“Small History” 242-243)

For Benjamin, early photography retains the unique presence of the subject and therefore, has a “magical value”. About the early people who stand for a studio portrait before the camera lens he writes: “there was an aura about them, an atmospheric medium that lent fullness and security to their gaze even as it penetrated that medium” (“Small History” 247). Early photographs' uniqueness comes from their focus on the

human face. Since their central point is portraits, for Benjamin, they still have a cult value and “aura”. Later on in the “Work of Art” essay he develops the “magical value” of old photographs and notes:

It is no accident that the portrait was the focal point of early photography. The cult remembrance of loved ones, absent or dead, offers a last refuge for the cult value of the picture. For the last time the aura emanates from the early photographs in the fleeting expression of a human face. This is what constitutes their melancholy, incomparable beauty. But as man withdraws from the photographic image, the exhibition value for the first time shows its superiority to the ritual value. (219)

It is the presence of the subject who gives old photographs their “auratic” value. The “auratic” power of the human face is a result of the memory and “cult remembrance”. Ulla Link-Heer further explains the above mentioned quotation from Benjamin. For her there are two reasons for the production of “auratic” photographs. The first is related to “the death of a loved one – absence in extremis - transfigures the medial likeness of the image into a *fascinosum*. (...) together with our memories, they touch on a distant era that is irrevocably lost” (117). The second is the emphasis Benjamin gives to the human face as “an auratic mode of being” (Link-Heer 118). The early photographs that are preserved by the family along with the “cult remembrance” and “together with our memories” have an “aura” (Link-Heer 118). But what happens to the ones that are exhibited in the stores at the antique market? What happens when the photographs are displaced and become anonymous that one can not recall any personal memory? What

happens if the old photograph depicted does not belong to the “loved ones, absent or dead” but to a stranger? (Benjamin “Work of Art” 219). Can we observe “aura” in “dispossessed family photographs” in the antique market?

In the antique market, sellers/collectors have a common feeling about “dispossessed family photographs”. It is a subtle emotion that is felt subjectively when “spectral images” are contacted. “It is not something describable”, says İlhan Şimşek, a seller from Ankara while explaining why these photographs are valuable and adds “what makes these photos valuable is that thing we are unable to explain. I mean, in old words, specific things. Depends from one person to the other”.<sup>46</sup> There is something indescribable in them, but one can feel their specialty. There is something intangible in “dispossessed photographs” that speak to the subject personally. One seller describes his experience in these words: “Photographs... How can I explain this to you? We talk to things sometimes. Photo’ speaks more than other objects. They talk more”.<sup>47</sup> “Aura” as a term refers to “a curious sensation of a cool or warm breeze” (Gumbrecht and Marrinan 83). Strikingly one of the sellers from *Samanpazarı* Ankara describes the feeling “dispossessed family photographs” caused as a breeze and atmosphere. He describes the moment photographs are perceived by a customer in these words: “The atmosphere, the *breeze* in them talks to them (customers) at that time, or the person feels and buys them

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<sup>46</sup> Şimşek, İlhan. 7. 12. 2004. “Babil Antika”, Ertuğ Passage, Tunalı Street – Ankara. (See original quotation in local language in appendix C26)

<sup>47</sup> Özatay, M. Sahabettin. 14.12.2004, Samanpazarı – Ankara.

(photos)”<sup>48</sup> The discourse in the antique market about “dispossessed photographs” is that they cause a subtle feeling which is hard to describe but can be experienced.

Regarding to this dominant opinion in the antique market can one say that this feeling is about the “aura” of photographs. Can the old photography in the domain of antique market have an “aura”, although photography is an activity of masses which destroys the moment’s “auratic” value or although there are no one to read and discover the “cult remembrance” they entail?

For Benjamin, “aura” is “a strange weave of space and time: the unique appearance or semblance of distance no matter how close the object may be” (“Small History” 250). Gilloch interprets this definition and explains Benjamin’s view on early photographs in these words: “that is, the specific conjunction of time and space (the long-forgotten and long-lost) to which photography attests” (177). Is not the essence of “dispossessed family photographs” comes from their quality of being “the long-forgotten and long-lost” (Gilloch 117).

In antique market, it is important to touch objects. Usually professional collectors touch the material before they buy it. Touching the object in the shop is a way for them to feel the subtle feeling the object causes. The photographs faded color, oldness, damages, smell, in short its imperfect but multi-sensory condition, changes the manner these images are perceived. There are several expressions that sellers/collectors use in the

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<sup>48</sup> Özatay, M. Sahabettin. 14.12.2004, Samanpazarı – Ankara. (See original quotation in local language in appendix C27)

market to describe the feeling that photographs cause when they are touched. Some define it as a vibration, some as a positive energy. Some of them just say that they feel the photographs' adventures, journeys and oldness when they touch the photographs. Even according to some, touching makes one travel in time. For example, Halil Bingöl, a second-hand book seller from Istanbul, says that they do not only sell the items but do have a special relation with them : “We won't sell them as concrete (...) we take them into our hands, we get our pleasure, talk to them and sell them thereafter.”<sup>49</sup> As Laura Marks says, “aura is the sense an object can give that it can speak to us of the past without ever letting us completely decipher it” (81). Also İlhan Şimşek thinks that selling an object from the past is a different experience: “I mean, it is a different thing to be touching an item from the past (...) I mean you establish a sort of connection. It takes you to the past just as a time machine”.<sup>50</sup> The metaphor “time machine” used here is interesting because these objects always preserve their distance from the viewer, however, close they might be because they are objects from the past that are exiting in present time. Their “auratic” quality comes from the distance they entail “no matter how close the object may be” (Benjamin “Small History” 250).

According to Benjamin, “aura” has a relation with ancient works of art, that is, it is in service of the ritual and the tradition. “Aura” rises out of the ancient religious objects of mystery and the works of art that has a cult value that had the power to return the

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<sup>49</sup> Bingöl, Halil. 04.12.2004, “Barış Kitabevi” Aslıhan Passage, Galatasaray – İstanbul. (See original quotation in local language in appendix C28)

<sup>50</sup> Şimşek, İlhan. 7. 12. 2004. “Babil Antika”, Ertuğ Passage Tunalı Street – Ankara. (See original quotation in local language in appendix C29)

spectator's gaze. Benjamin not only considers "aura" as the "sight of immediate reality" that became a rare thing in the word of technology but he also considers "aura" as the experience of the subject's gaze that is returned by what s/he is looking at ("Work of Art" 226). Gilloch indicates that "aura is the individual quality of the sitter which emanates from his or her eyes and which meets the gaze cast open it. Aura is unfathomable darkness, unbridgeable distance, unexpected reciprocity" (117). Contemporary photographs do not have a cult value as they are products of mechanical reproduction, but photographs that are circulating in the antique market may entail a cult value and "aura" that one can experience the sense of his/her gaze being returned by photographs. Because, in "spectral images", to borrow Gilloch words, there is always an "unbridgeable distance", but at the same time, an "unexpected reciprocity". The feeling of being watched by "dispossessed family photographs" effects the way images are perceived in the antique market.

As mentioned earlier, considering "dispossessed family photographs" as alive is a common reaction among members of the antique market. Can this reaction also because of the "aura" rising from the images? Is it related with the gaze that is returning from the photographs? "Aura is the quality in an object that makes our relationship to it like a relationship with another human being. It seems to look back at us" (Marks 80).

Erhun Hiçyılmaz, a seller from Istanbul, regards cutting photographs as killing them and using photographs of a character's eyes in an artwork as making the image alive again. Is it because the eyes return the look of the viewer?



Those buying them to keep are different from those buying them to utilize. Perhaps they are buying the photo, cutting it and making it a collage. Perhaps he is executing the photo on the collage after cutting it, I don't know. Or it starts living in a painting. The man's eyes, for example.<sup>51</sup>

Thinking photographs as alive, makes one feel that one's gaze is returned by the photographed subject. As Benjamin says, the "aura" is experienced in the returning look. In this sense, can "spectral images" return the look of the spectators? Different than other collection items, these collected pieces may return the spectator's look. The feeling of being watched by the image while staring to it is the aspect that makes these items both appealing and disturbing at the same time. What creates the "aura" is "the expectation that what looks at one, one also looks back at" (Brecht qtd. in Link-Heer 114).

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<sup>51</sup> Hiçyılmaz, Erhun. 04.12.2004, "Erhun Hiçyılmaz Antika", Beyoğlu - İstanbul. (See original quotation in local language in appendix C30)

## 5. CONCLUSION

*To collect photograph is to collect the world*

*Susan Sontag*<sup>52</sup>

Susan Sontag in her book *On Photography* says that “each still photograph is a privileged moment turned into a slim object that one can keep and look at again” (18). This observation holds true when photographs say something personal to the viewer. But when the depicted subjects become total strangers to the viewer these special image-objects lose their privileged status. Photographs do not disappear when subjects in them pass away. Their presence becomes mysterious when the link between the subject and images is broken. Memories get stuck in the photograph without having a chance to be expressed anymore. But these objects will continue to be kept and looked at after their “owners” are gone. This thesis is concerned with lives and journeys of family photographs after they get separated from their private context. Photographs continue to exist after the death of subjects depicted in them. The death of the subject changes the way these photographs are perceived and apprehended. They gain new meanings and exist in different contexts. This thesis seeks to discover what happens to such family photographs after they are abandoned and discarded. What are the reasons for their

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<sup>52</sup> Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*. 1977. London: Penguin Books, 1979 (p3).

abandonment? How come they can survive after they are disposed? In which domain they are accepted? And how do their meaning shift in time?

Walter Benjamin in his accounts on photography claims that, in modern societies through reproduction, the special power artworks have, is destroyed. He calls this special power the “aura” of the artwork. According to him, the new practices of film and photography do not contain any “aura”, since they are mechanically reproduced. In this study, I argue that although “dispossessed family photographs” are examples of mechanical reproduction, they have a peculiar “aura”.

For Benjamin although mechanical reproduction destroys the “aura” there is a special genre of photograph that does not lose its “auratic” quality. That is early photography that focuses on portraits. Memory and the “cult of remembrance” that these photographs entail, give the human face an “auratic” power. Early photographs that have been preserved by the family along with other personal memories, then, have an “aura”. The question that this study poses is: what happens to the “auratic” quality of photographs if they get separated from the family? What happens if photographs are displaced and dispossessed and get an anonymous quality that no one can recall any personal memory? Can we sense an “aura” surrounding “dispossessed family photographs” circulating in antique markets? Although these “dispossessed family photographs” present individual family scenes, when they are gathered in a common place (e.g. the antique market) they present bits of pieces about the social, political and cultural history. It is possible to observe in “dispossessed family photographs” common patterns formed by society’s norms. Even though these photographs come from a personal domain, certain cultural

dynamics can be traced in them. After getting dispossessed, they become a representation of public memory. Although they do not reveal personal memories of the depicted subjects, “dispossessed family photographs” entail a “cult remembrance”. The specialty of these photographs comes from their indefinite and shifting value. They not only have an “exhibition value” as they are exhibited in shop windows, but also retain a “cult value” as they still preserve a memorial quality.



**Figure 16.** “Dispossessed family photographs” that are on sale in an antique shop in Samanpazarı District, Ankara (14.12.2004).

In the antique market, among sellers/collectors there is a common discourse about “dispossessed family photographs”. There is something special about “dispossessed family photographs” which is hard to describe, but can only be experienced. Although members of the antique market do not call this subtle feeling “aura”, their descriptions can be related to the features of “aura”.

As a final remark, I believe “spectral images” by all conflicts they entail, all shifts in their status and meaning, somehow provide a weird insight and realization for individuals personally. This study reveals that “dispossessed family photographs” have a crucial role among other kinds of photograph because they present memories of strangers and make their “audience” face with his/her inevitable future death.

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### **Interviews**

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: Sample Interview in local language

Bingöl, Halil. 04.12.2004, “Barış Kitabevi” Aslıhan Pasajı, Galatasaray – İstanbul.

P: Sanıyorum ki burada eski fotoğraflar da var.

H: Var, bizde kağıda basılı eski olan her şey var.

P: Benim en çok merak ettiğim şey, kişisel aile fotoğraflarının nasıl buralarda satıldığı.

H: Şimdi, kişisel aile fotoğrafları diye biz tabi onu algılamıyoruz. Biz onu eski fotoğraf olarak algılıyoruz. Bunlar bize nasıl ulaşıyor? Onu soruyorsunuz. Bunlar bize şu şekilde ulaşıyor. Birincisi, bu aile ortadan kalkıyor. Nasıl ortadan kalkıyor? Aile ölüyor.

Diyelim bir karı koca kalmışlar. İkiside, adam ölüyor ondan sonra kadın ölüyor. Diyelim atıyorum Nişantaşında bir dairede oturuyor bunlar. Bunların çocukları var ama hiç ilgilenmiyorlar aileleri ile. Tamam mı, annesi ile babası ile dahi ilgilenmiyorlar. Yani geçmişlerine sahip olmayan aile kuşağı var. Veyahut da, o kişilerin hiç kimsesi kalmıyor. Daire kalıyor hazineye. Atıyorum, misal. Devlete kalıyor, veyahutda başka bir mirasçıya kalıyor. O gelen mirasçı aileden hiç bir iz bırakmamak için bütün eşyaları satıyor. İlk önce satılan eşyalar arasında kitaptır. İlk önce kitaplar satılır, yani kağıt ile ilgili olan şeyler satılır. Kağıtların içinde genelde kütüphanenin bir kenarına konulur albümler, ve fotoğraflar. Bu albümlerle bu fotoğraflar bunlarla birlikte hurdacıya gidiyor genelde. Hani kapıdan geçiyor ya “eski alırım kağıt alırım, onu alırım şunu alırım” onlara veriyorlar.

P: Kitaplar ile birlikte.

H: Herşey. Boşaltacaklar ya evi. Satıcaklar misal veya badana yapacak, boya yapacak değiştirecek evi.

P: Hemen kurtulmak istiyor yani.

H: Hemen kurtulmak istiyor. Bu şekilde oluyor. Yani aile komple ortadan kalkıyor.

Ondan sonra, çok enteresan bir şey olmuştu onu da anlatayım ben sana. Bir tarihte, ben Beyazıt’dan gelmeyim buraya, bir tarihte biz Fatih’de bir eve gittik. Bir bayan geldi, genç de bir bayan. “Kitaplar var” dedi, “gelip bir bakar mısınız?”. “Tabi” dedim “gelip bakarız”. Gittik. Kadıncağız, annesi, yaşlı bir kadın, oturuyor, biz kitaplara bakıyoruz. Bir güzel anlaştık tamam. “Bir şartım var yalnız” dedi. “Buyrun” dedim “nedir şartınız?” Hayırdır, ne şartı olabilir ki? Bir tarafa böyle yığılmış bir sürü resimler, albümler. “İlk önce bunları alacaksınız” dedi “Beyazıt Meydanında bunları bedava dağıtacaksınız” dedi. “Ben sizi gelip kontrol edeceğim” dedi. Şimdi dükkanın önu müşahit tabi. “Ondan sonra” dedi “bu kitapları size satacağım, yoksa satmam” dedi.

P: Fotoğrafları bedava vermenizi istiyor etrafta, peki neden ki?

H: Evet, “neden peki?” dedim. Ben dedi “evliydim, kocam beni aldattı kaçtı” dedi. O kaçtığı adamın, kocasının kendisi ile çekilmiş fotoğrafları ve gizlice kadının hafife tutup kocasıyla sevgilisinin çektiği fotoğrafları. “Onu da gelip burada satıcaksınız millete ibreti alem için rezil olacak bu adam!” dedi.

P: İnanamıyorum çok ilginç.

H: “Olmaz öyle şey kardeşim” dedim. Bir yandan da kitaplara bakıyorum. Kitaplar. Almam lazım benim bu kitapları! Ama kadının şartı ağır.

P: İnanılmaz, ama kendi de yaşıyor.

H: Evet evet, hepsi hayatta. E dedim sizi de tanıyan çıkacak. “Olsun” dedi. “Herkez biliyor benim ne olduğumu, onun da ne olduğunu biliyor. Tek amacım benim onu rezil etmek” dedi. “Bu kitaplar da onun kitapları, onun için satıyorum” dedi “O zaman sizden bir yazı almam gerek, onun kitapları ise hukuki bir sorun olabilir” dedim. “O zaman” dedim “kabul ediyorum”. Bir hafta boyunca kadın her gün bir albüm getiriyor.

Çözüyoruz albümü, söküyoruz.

P: Albüm halinde satmıyorsunuz yani.

H. Hayır ortaya bir kutu koyduk böyle. “Bedava fotoğraf” diyoruz. Millet bedava fotoğraf ne demek diye gelip bakıyor. O zaman da pek fotoğraflara kimsenin baktığı yok. “Allah Allah” diyorlar ama başladılar almaya. Bedava diyorum kardeşim alın. 10 tane alıyor, 5 tane alıyor. Alan gidiyor alan gidiyor. Bizim orası tam geçiş yeri. Kapalı Çarşıya geçiş, oraya buraya geçiş. O alıyor, bu alıyor derken bir hafta oldu. Tüm fotoğrafları dağıttık. Ondan sonra gittim kitapları aldım. Bir sene önce de bir müşterim bak bunu getirdi bana hediye etti. “Halil abi bu sensin!” dedi (Gösterdiği fotoğraf 1900’lerden kalma olduğunu tahmin ettiğimiz bir stüdyofotografı. Fotoğrafın arkasında, fotoğrafçının imzası ve fotoğraf stüdyosunun damgası var. Fotorafta gerçekten kendisine çok benzeyen, şık giyimli bir beyefendi poz veriyor). Fotoğraf 1910 yılında çekilmiş. Eve götürdüm çocuklar korkular.

P: Her şeyi ile birlikte gerçekten size çok benziyor.

H. Her şeyi ile birlikte, ben de şaşırdım. Bir namaz kıldım yani dedim bunda bir şey var. Bir espri var yani diye. Bir şükür namazı kıldık yani, size 1910 yılındaki halinizi gösterdim. Bilmiyorum onu sen yorumlayacaksın artık. Hadi buyur bakalım. Apayrı bir şey ya fotoğraf. Şimdi o fotoğraf çekilmiş, bu adamın 1910 yılındaki donmuş hali o. Orada kalmış, O adam da yok şimdi. Mesela diyelim ki biraz önce sen geldin buraya. İsmail ile kapıdan içeri girdin. Şimdi o kapıdan içeri giren sen yoksun ki.

P: Evet bitti artık o.

H: Gitti, saniyelik olay çünkü o.

P: Ama fotoğraflanmış olsa o anı durdurmuştuk.

H: O saniyedeki, o salisedeki hali. Bunu tespit etmek mümkün değil. Mümkün değil, anladın mı olayı. Yaşam çizgisi o işte. O çizgi üzerinde yürüyoruz başka bir şey değil. Biz bir noktadan çıktık, bir noktaya kadar bir düzlük üzerinde yürüyoruz. Bak o noktalar yanyana geliyor çizgi oluyor ve biz o çizginin önünde yürüyoruz. Her bir salisede bir nokta konuyor. Tak tak tak tak!!!

P. Fotoğraf gibi işte.

H: Evet!

H: Ne demek istediğimi anladın mı? Ne anladın sen?

P: Ben fotoğraf ile ölümün iç içeliğini anladım.

H: Ölüm diye bir şey yok. O zaman çizgisi üzerinde, biraz önce de anlattığım çizgi üzerinde, yer değiştirme var. Başka bir şey değil. Çünkü ruh ebedi, ölmüyor. Şekil A

(üzerinde konuştuğumuz kendisine benzeyen fotoğrafı işaret eder). Gelip geçiyoruz anlasana!

P: Çok güzel. O an yakalanmış ve bu size gelmiş ve iki an çarpışmış!

H: Bağlantı kuruldu. Hayret bir şey. Bu önemli bir şey yani. Eski fotoğraf derken mesela bunların hepsi canlı, kitaplar canlı fotoğraflar canlı. Onlarla konuşuruz, paylaşıyoruz, dertleşiriz. Onu alır oraya koyarız, “burada satılmıyorum” der, buraya koyarız, satarız.

P: E o zaman insan tanımadığı insanların fotoğrafları ile dahi ilişki kurabiliyor. Peki kimler bu fotoğrafları alıyor? Bunların koleksiyonlarını yapan insanlar kim?

H: Ressamlar, roman yazarları, koleksiyoncular, meraklılar. Diyelim ki fotoğraf topluyor adam, koleksiyon fotoğrafı olarak, hiç akla gelmeyecek bir şey; vesikalık fotoğraflar. Hangi vesikalık fotoğrafları topluyor? 50’li yıllarda ipek karta basılmış fotoğrafları topluyor. Ama nasıl olacak? Kenarları tırtıklı olacak. Kimse birbirine benzemiyor ki hepsi tek, yaratandan dolayı. Şahane bir koleksiyon! Ama sırf 50’li yılların. Onu topluyor, onunla kafayı buluyor adam. Mesela bir kitap basıldı. Bu kitabın kapağı buradan alınan bir fotoğraf ile yapılmıştır.

P: Bir grafiker de almış.

H: Buyrun. Aldı, sonrada imzaladı adam kitabı.

P: Yani, çok çeşitli bir alıcı kitlesi var fotoğrafın.

H: Yani mesela bu eski fotoğraf burada kullanıldı.

P: Mesela, vesikalıkları toplayan adam, o fotoğraflardaki insanları tanımıyor. Tamam yanyana geldiği zaman o fotoğraflar çok keyifli bir koleksiyon oluşturuyor ama o kişileri tanımamak...

H: Ya ne diyorsun sen. Bir müşteri var, şimdi rahatsız gelemiyor, profesör yani bilinen çok çok meşhur bir profesör. Kendisi bekar, evlenmedi. Geldi buraya, “sende çok güzel fotoğraflar var. Bana lütfen 30’lu 40’li yılların gelin ve damat fotoğraflarını göster” dedi Kartpostal şeklindeki. En az bin tane şu anda elinde öyle fotoğraf koleksiyonu vardır. Bak şimdi ne çıkıyor. Damadın elbise modeli çıkıyor, damatın saç tıraşı modeli çıkıyor, damadın ayakkabı modeli çıkıyor, gelinin gelinlik modeli çıkıyor, saç modeli çıkıyor, aksesuar modeli çıkıyor, fotoğrafçının damgası çıkıyor. Mesela bir papaz vardır İstanbul’da, ismi lazım değil. Ortodoks papazıdır. Ben delikanlılığımdan beri tanımam kendisini. Bu adam fotoğraf toplar. Arkası damgalı fotoğraf toplar. Ama türk fotoğrafı toplar, anadolu fotoğrafı toplar, arkasında damga olacak. Ne oldu? Fotoğrafçılık tarihi çıktı. Ama bak ben 59 yaşındayım 60’a geliyorum, delikanlılığımdan beri tanıyorum. Adam hala aynı ve topluyor.

P: Elli senelik bir arşivi var.

H: Ya, manyak bir şey ya manyak bir şey! Şu anda hayatta ve benden dinç. Buraya geliyor ve “hani nerede benim fotoğraflarım?” Gel diyorum bir elini öpeyim de ondan sonra. Çok hürmet veriyorum ona. Adam ortodoks, papaz! Alim! Alim adam.

P: Bunları topluyor insanlar sonra sergiliyorlar mı evlerinde ya da nasıl tutuyorlar?

H: Onu bilemeyiz biz, onu soramayız. Bizim ustamız bize demişti. Müşteri ismini söylemedikten sonra, veyahutda bir şey söylemedikten sonra, telefonunu söylemedikten sonra, asla ve asla hiç sormayacaksın. Ne zamanki müşteri söyler ki işte şu işte şu.

P: Peki sizin yaptığınız özel bir koleksiyon var mı?

H: Burada her taraf koleksiyon (dükkanının içini göstererek). Deli misin bir de koleksiyon yapsak tam deliririz. Onlar bizi esir alır o zaman. Muhakkak! Mesela bir arkadaşımız var burada, kitaplar onu esir aldı. Resmen esir aldı. Alıyor devamlı alıyor ama satamıyor.

P: Veremiyor çünkü çok seviyor kitaplarını öyle mi?

H: Evi, depo oldu. Kendi tapulu evi depo oldu. Çıktılar evden. Eşyalar da kaldı, çıkartamadılar evden. Yığılmış artık. Kiraya çıktılar. Kirada oturuyor şimdi. Şu an dükkanına girilemiyor. Yaklaşık bin beş yüz metre kare üzerinde depo arıyor. Orayı da dolduracak işte. Hanımı böyle yapıyor (yaka silkme hareketi yapar). Dedim bak allah gecinden versin, ama hanım çağırır bizi ertesi günü. Yanaştırırız kamyonu kapıya söyleyeyim sana. Sat dedim, ye parayı! Saat birde filan gelir. Fotoğraf pek toplamaz, var fotoğraf da var ama asıl kitap. Satamıyor, satmıyor! Bütün varlığını her şeyi toplamak üzerine.

P: Neden insanlar topluyor?

H: Ya şimdi onun söylediği şey, “bir daha ben bu kitapları bulamam”. Ya bulsan ne olacak ki. “Ben onları seviyorum, ben onlardan ayırlamam”.

P: Çok sıkı bir ilişkisi var kitapları ile yani.

H: Ben sana ne diyorum, canlı diyorum bunlar ya! Bir ilişkisi olmasa, sen sevmesen bir şey alır mısın? Aranızda bir ilişki oluyor işte. Bak şimdi Rudolf Valentino'nun çok nadir bir kitabı. *Rudolf Valentino'nun Aşk Maceraları*. Buyrun. 1927. Şimdi böyle bir konu ile uğraşan, yabancı sinemayı araştıran, Rudolf Valentino hayranı, bu kitabı görse bitti, bitti her şey bitti. Kapağında fotoğrafı baksana adamın. 1927 yılındaki fotoğrafları basılı bunun içinde, yani fotoğraf açısından söylersek. Estetik açısından söylersek, bak kitabın güzelliğine bak, kompozisyonuna bak. Çok güzel, her şeyi ile dört dörtlük. Bu bambaşka bir şey! Fotoğraflar, kitaplar, eski ama bu. Bak 1638 yılında basılmış kitap var orada! Şimdi oraya gidip kapağını açtığın zaman 1638 yılına gitmiş oluyorsun. Zaman içinde seyahat ediyorsun dikkat et! Şu anda 1638 yılındasın çünkü en eski kitap şu anda bu. Şurada bak duruyor. Eline alsana hemen. Kalk hemen ne duruyorsun!!! Aç kapağını elini sür! Şimdi 1638 yılına gidiyorsun. Gidiyorsun işte gittin daha şeyi var mı! 1638 yılındasın şu anda Paris'desin. Grekçe ve Latince din felsefesi. 7 cilt.

P: Nereden geldi bu?

H: Çöpten topluyoruz bunları. İnanmayacaksın ama çöpten.

P: İnanmıyorum bunu da mı, gerçekten mi?

H: Evet

H: Fotoğrafın öncesi var bir de, gravürler var. Gravür de yapmış resim gibi. Bakıyorsun aynen resim.

P: O zamanın fotoğrafı işte.

H: Fotoğraf yenidir işte. Yani bizi fotoğraftan çok gravür etkiliyor. Ama fotoğraf, tam manası ile belgesel oluyor. Şey yani belge, belge başka bir şey değil.

P: O zamanın tanığı.

H: Ama arkasına tarih veya bir şey yazmış ise, Yani yazmamış ise yırt at, hiç bir

P: Öylemi gerçekten tarihi bir değeri yok ise

H: E tarih yok arkasında, hangi tarih? Çıkartıyoruz biz onu tabi, o çıkar da ama olmuyor işte olmuyor. Yani koleksiyon değeri yok.

P: Damga veya tarih gerekli.

H: Damgadan adamın şeyini buluyorsun.

P: Kim olduğunu yani stüdyonun,

H: Kim olduğunu, yani fotoğrafçısının kim olduğunu buluyorsun. Fotoğrafçıdan hangi tarihler arasında fotoğraf çekildiğini buluyorsun üç aşağı beş yukarı. Veyahut da arşivine giriyorsun, bu tarihte bu adam burada ticari faaliyette bulunmuş. Ticari yıllıklar var.

(araya telefon konuşması girer)

H: 1920'li yıllarda bir delikanlının kendi hayatını anlatan bir albümü var.

Küçüklüğünden başlamış albümde anlatmaya,

P: İşte ben de tam böyle bir şey arıyorum.

H: Delikanlılığa gelmiş bırakmış.

P: Ne olmuş kimbilir.

H: Ben ne biliyim. Orada duruyor.

P: Şimdi burada var mı.

H: Evet, bizde yok yok ki ya. Bizde her şey var.

(Albüm vitrinde durmaktadır. Göstermek için çıkartır.)

H: Doğum tarihim demiş. Çocukluk senelerim (albümdeki yazıları okur)

P: Yazmış işte! Bu onun anısı. Beni en çok heyecanlandıran şey işte bu notlar.

H: Çocukluk senelerim. Bak erkek çocuğu nasıl giyinmiş (albümdeki karakterin etek giydiği stüdyo fotoğrafları hakkında konuşuyoruz).

H: 1923 İstanbul, 1924 İstanbul, 1926 İstanbul, 1926 Ankara, 1927 Ankara, Kayseri'ye geldi 28 Kayseri, (sayfalar çevrilir ve fotoğrafların altına düşülmüş notları okur)

P: Büyüyor!

H: 29 İstanbul'a geldi. Ankara'ya gitti asker oldu. 30 Ankara'da. Memur oldu. 31 Ankara'da orada kaldı bitti. Yani 1905den, 1906 diyelim bir yaşında, 31'e kadar adamın hayatı.

P: Bir kişinin hikayesini okumak... Fotoğraf albümünün içine fotoğraftan başka konulan anı objeleri de ilginç.

H: Ooo, o hatıra defterinin işi. Bak şimdi bende bir hatıra defteri vardı. Onu göstereyim. Onlar çok eski.

P: Ayy bu kilitli hatıra defteri. Bana çok dokunuyor böyle şeyler.

H: Bende bir defter vardı, bir bulabilsem. Yav, bakıyorum bakıyorum bu kız bana hiç yabancı gelmiyor. Ve şurda matbaacının kızı. Adamı tanırım ben matbaacı olarak. Üç gün sonra kadının haberi çıkmadı mı şeyde, gazetede. Kadın ölmeden önce hatıra defteri geldi. Fotoğrafi var içinde, ondan sonra... Ölüm ilanını da kestim içine koydum.

P: O sizin sonradan eklediğiniz bir anı oluyor.

H: Yani. Anı defterine girdiğin zaman özele girmiş oluyorsun o bizi pek ilgilendirmiyor. Beni hüznendiriyor mesela. Burada bir şiir mesela, senin söylediğin şeyler işte. Mesela Nazım Hikmet'in şiirleri var burada.

P: Bu bir şiir defteri olsa gerek.

H: Evet, bak sonra doktor olmuş, resmi var. Şemshimah. Şems güneş demek mah da ay demek. Şemshimah ay yüzlü güneş mi, ay ve güneş mi...

P: İnsanın içi cız etmiyor mu şuna bakınca?

H: Ya bir tarihte, bir mal aldık içinden o çok şey çıktı, üzücü çıktı. Kadıncağız fotoğrafları biriktirmiş biriktirmiş, aile fotoğraflarını sonradan iş karışmış. Kadın yani içkili yerlere filan da düşmüş, bunların fotoğrafları da var.

P: Onları da koymuş albümüne.

H: Onları da koymuş evet.

P: Yani ayırmamış.

H: Evet ama özel bir albüm pahalı filan böyle. Çok çok özele girmiş. Bazen öyle özel fotoğraflar çıkıyor. Onları ayıklıyoruz, ayırıyoruz.

P: Bu çok ilginç değil mi işte sizce, çok özel olan fotoğrafların, çok özel anların fotoğraflanmasından sonra bunların herkezin görebileceği yerlerde sergilenmesi.

H: Bak şimdi böyle enteresan şeyler de oluyor bak. Bak şimdi. (özel olarak tanımladığı ama atmadığı fotoğrafları gösterir, bir fotoğrafta mayolu bir kadın bir tekneye yaslanarak poz vermiştir. Teknenin adı “soyun” dur. Diğer fotoğraflar ise zamanında görece açık giyinmiş kadınların poz verirkenki fotoğraflarıdır. Gündelik hayattan sahneler de vardı.).

(telefon gelir konuşma kesilir)

P: Peki bu albümler nedir? Yeni olsa gerek.

H: Şimdi bu albümler bir ajansın, bir film ajansının ya da model ajansının albümleri, 70’li yıllar. Bak şimdi bu resimlerden kendimize göre bir tane seçtik.

P: A bu kızı tanıyorum ben.

H: Nereden tanıyorsun?

P. Televizyondan dimi.

H: Sevinç Erbulak. Altan Erbulak’ın kızı. Altan Erbulak Erzurumludur ben de Erzurumluymumdur onun için ayırdım bunu. 75 doğumlu, bu 85-90 yılı.

P: Bu tanıdık bir sima olduğu için değeri var tabi.

H: Ya, değeri şu; haber verdim ona, gelince armağan edeceğim. Yani değeri bu. Şimdi sen gitmişsin oraya model olarak fotoğraf vermişsin, çekilmişsin, çektirmişsin burada arşivde kalmış. Gün geliyor zaman geliyor bunlar çöpe atılıyor. Çöpten gelme bunlar bize!!! Dışarda kutunun içinde bu fotoğrafların devamı var.

P: Gelen fotoğrafları siz belli bir sisteme göre kategorize ediyor musunuz?

H. Tabi, sinemaya ilgili olanları ayırıyoruz, vesaire diğerlerini artık atıyoruz ama kendimize ait olanları seçiyoruz tabi. Gel bak şimdi dışardakilerin başında izahat verelim. Bak şimdi şunlar türk sineması ile ilgili fotoğraflar. Lobi dediğimiz, sinemalardaki yerlere asılırdı o dönemde filmin reklamı için. Bunlar ajanstan gelenler demin konuştuğumuz. Ben bunları tanımıyorum gençler hep tanıyor ama bunları.

P: A evet bir sürü var burada şimdi ünlü olan kişi.

H: Mesela bak bu Yelpaze Dergisi vardı bir zamanlar, onun prova baskıları. Tabi bunlar belgesel yani. Bak bu eski bir mimarın, dağıtmış şeyini, oradan çıkmış.

P: Mimari fotoğraflar evet.

H: Şimdi ahşap evlerle ilgili koleksiyon yapan biri için, geliyor alıyor bunları buradan. Mesela burası bunlar birer milyon olanlar. Bunlar eski İstanbul ile ilgili olan resimler. Bunlar ikişer milyon lira. Bak bunlar 250’şer bin lira. Bak gitmiş o zaman eğlenmiş orada, ya ayrılmış ya boşanmış, neler neler. Burada ölmüş hayatlar var bitmiş hayatlar var, geçmiş hayatlar var. Geçmişe yolculuk yapmak sadece kitaplarla değil bunlarla da.

P: Peki şimdi ben kişisel koleksiyonum için sorayım. Sizde albüm var mı?

H. Eski albüm.

P: Evet ama içinde fotoğraflar olan.

H: Bir tane var şurda.

P: Ben bir ailenin kendini nasıl resmettiğini merak ediyorum.

H: Şöyle enteresan bir şey var, belki işine yarayacaktır. Bir ailenin sırf düğün fotoğrafları.

P: A bakmıştım ben buna. Geçen geldiğimde.

H: Bakmış mıydın? Sadece bu var.

P: Genelde hep ayırıyorsunuz fotoğrafları dimi?

H: Ayırırız. Dağıtırız yani fotoğrafları, bir arada tutmayız. Albümler tutulmaz. Boş albüm de var.

P: Boşaltıp fotoğrafları ayrı ayrı satıyorsunuz.

H: Ayrı ayrı tabi. Mesela geliyor bakıyor bana bu lazım arka planda görüntü olucak diyor sinemacılar özellikle, film yapımcıları. Dur şimdi paydos. Çay molası. (Çay molası veriyoruz)

H: Dışarıda bir sürü sönmüş hayat var söyledim ya sana. Böyle bir şey iste.

P: Çok teşekkür ederim herşey için gerçekten.

H: Zamana yolculuk etmek istiyorsan buraya uğramadan olmuyor yani. Bak geldin pat 1638 yılına gittin. Birgün gelirsın bir bakarsın 1510 yılına gitmişsin, o zamandan bir kitap vardı zamanında. Burada iki buçuk sene önce 1493 yılında basılmış gravür sattık. Ama satmadan önce çerçevesinden çıkarttık gelene geçene bir el sürdürttük. Yoksa biz öyle beton gibi satmayız malı.

P: Yaşarsınız önce bir yani

H: Elimize alırsız, zevkimizi alırsız, konuşuruz sohbet ederiz. Tamam sonra satarız onu.

H: Şimdi fotoğrafçılığın tarihine girersen, İstanbulda fotoğrafçılığın tarihi onlarla ilgili kitaplar var tabi. Bir giriş yapman lazım tabi fotoğrafa. Ondan sonra fotoğrafın toplum üzerindeki tesirleri, insanlar üzerindeki etkileri. Şimdi öyle fotoğraflar var ki bakıyorsun adamlar bizden önce ne kadar mutlu bir şekilde yaşamışlar. Şaşıyorsun. Bak şimdi dışarda, hemen kapıdan çık, cama bak cama bir resim koydum. Bak şimdi adamın kıyafetine bak. Bugün hangi damat böyle giyinir? Ben kendi resimlerime baktım, yanyana koydum lan dedim nasıl giyinmişim. Ya olmaz böyle bir şey ya. O kadar hımbılız ki onların yanında. Manyak birşey. O 30'lu - 40'lı yılların düğün resimlerini gör, toplumu gör. Toplumun aynası onlar. Yansıtıyor aynen.

P: Toplumsal araştırma yapmak üzere koleksiyon yapan da vardır herhalde, demin dediniz gerçi.

H: Sırf genç erkek fotoğrafı toplayan var, sırf genç kadın fotoğrafı toplayan var, sırf orta yaşlı kadın fotoğrafı, portre toplayan var, ebatla fotoğraf toplayan var. Elinde cetvelle geliyor adam ölçüyor, o ebatla uyuyor ise alıyor. Hele bir ressam hanım var. O yılda bir kere geliyor. Onun bir kartonu var. Yukarıda. Büyük bir karton. Onu indiriyoruz. Açıyoruz. Sabah erken gelir o. Tabureyi veriyoruz altına. Böyle bakıyor atıyor şeyin üzerine onu tuval olarak kabul ediyor. Kalkıyor, oraya atıyor, kartonun üzeri komple doluyor. Sonra bir saat onun üzerinde düşünüyor. Sigara içiyor, çay içiyor. Sonra yerlerini değiştiriyor. Ondan sonra olduğu yerden arkalarını çevirip numara koyuyor onlara. Ondan sonra topluyor alıyor gidiyor. Ve yani hesap mesap yok. Önüme bir para atıp gidiyor. İyi bir para atıyor yani. Konuşma da yok. Hiç bir konuşma da geçmemiştir aramızda. Ben onu görüyorum. Sadece bir baş hareketi ile selamlıyorum. Bizde fazla konuşma olmaz. Müşteriyi asla sıkmayız. O sorarsa.

## **Appendix B: English Translation of the Sample Interview.**

Bingöl, Halil. 04.12.2004, "Barış Kitabevi" Aslihan Pasage, Galatasaray – İstanbul.

P: I suppose that you are also selling old photos here.

H: Yes, we have everything that is old and printed on the paper.

P: What I mostly wonder about is how the personal family photographs are sold herein.

H: Now, the thing that the personal family photographs; of course we do not consider it in this way. We consider it as the old photograph. How are these delivered to us? You ask about it. These are delivered to us as such. First, this family is extinct. What kind of extinction? The family dies. We suppose that a wife and a husband remained. Both of two of them, the man dies and then the woman dies. Suppose that I fancy they reside in a flat in Nişantaşı. They have children of their own, but they never care about their families. Well, they do not take any care of even their mother and father. I mean there is a family generation which never possess their past. Either, no relation of those people exists. The flat is reserved by the Treasury. I fancy, for example. It is reserved by the State or by another heir. This so-called heir sells all the properties in order to erase all tracks of the family. The first stuff to be sold is always books. Books are sold first, that is, the things related to the paper are sold. Among the papers, in general, placed into one side of the library, the albums and the photographs. These albums and these photographs generally go to the scrap dealer with those. Well indeed, they pass in front of the doors like that "I buy oldies, I buy papers, I buy this and that" They give to them.

P: Together with the books.

H: Everything, well, they will empty the house, they will sell it for example or repaint the house, change the house.

P: That is they wish to get rid of immediately.

H: They wish to get rid of immediately. This happens so. That is the family is completely extinct. Then, something very interesting had happened, let me tell you that. I came here from Beyazıt, once, we went to a house in Fatih. A lady came, she was also young. "There are some books" said she, "Would you please come and have a look at?" "Of course" I said "I will come and have a look at". We went. The woman, her mother, and an old woman, are sitting; we are looking at the books. We agreed on well, okay. "Only, I have one condition" said she. "Well" said I "What is your condition?" All is well, what kind of condition could she have? She has massed a lot of pictures, albums on one side. "You shall buy these first." She said. "You shall give out these at Beyazıt Square with no price." She said. "I will come and control you". She said. Now, the front of the shop is suitable, of course. "And then" she said "I will sell these books to you, or I will not" she said.

P: She wants you to give the photographs free here and there, so why?

H: Yes, "so why" I asked. "I" she said "was married, my husband betrayed me and fled away." She said. The photographs of that fled man that were taken with herself together with her husband and the ones belonged to her husband and his lover which the woman hired a detective and made them taken. "You will come and sell it here and this man will have been put to shame as a warning to the others"

P: I cannot believe it, very interesting.

H: "This is impossible, lady" I said. On the other hand I am looking at the books, the books, I must buy these books, but her condition is very hard.



P: Unbelievable, but she is also alive herself.

H: Yes, yes, all of them are alive. Well, I said. There will be the ones who know you. "let it be" she said. "Everybody knows who I am, and also know who he is. My only purpose is to disgrace him" she said. These books are his books, thus I sell them" she said. "Then, I must take a writing from you, if they are his books, there may occur a legal problem" I said. "Then" I said "I accept". For one week, the woman brings an album every day. We untie the album, dismantle it.

P: You mean you do not sell it as a complete album.

H: No, we put an open box. We say "Free photograph". Everybody comes and wonders what the free photograph is. That time, nobody looks at the photographs. "Oh my God" they say, but they started to buy. "It is free, brother" I say "Let you take one". They take 10, take 5, the ones who took them go and go. Our place is just crossroads. Passage to the Grand Bazaar, passage to everywhere. This one takes, that one takes, so one week passed, we distributed all photographs. And then I went and bought the books. A year ago, one of my clients brought this and gave me as a present, look, here. "Brother Halil, this is you" said he. (The picture he showed is a cabinet card studio portrait which I guess it was remained from 1900s', behind it, there is the signature of the photographer and the seal of the photograph studio, indeed, a very chic- dressed gentleman poses for who looks like himself.) This photograph has been taken in the year of 1910. I brought it home, the children were afraid.

P: With everything of it, really it looks like you.

H: With everything of it, I was also surprised. I performed a namaz (ritual prayer), I said there something in it, a joke in it. I performed a thanksgiving namaz so, I showed you how you were in the year of 1910. I do not know, you will interpret it, now. Well, take it. A very distinct thing that photograph. Now, that photograph has been taken, that is the frozen situation of this man in the year of 1910. It has remained there. There is no such man now either, suppose that you came here a while ago, together with Ismail, you entered in from the door. Now, you who entered in from the door are not you, yourself.

P: Yes, it is over now.

H: It is gone, because it is an event for a moment.

P: But if it was taken into photograph, we would have stopped that moment.

H: The situation at that moment, at that second. Determining this is not possible. It is impossible, do you understand this event? That is the lifeline. We walk on that line and that is nothing else. We departed from one point, and walk on a plain until a point. Look, those points come side by side and compose a line and we walk in front of that line. In every second a point more is added. Knock knock knock!!!

P: It is just like the photograph.

H: Yes!

H: Did you understand what I want to say? What did you understand?

P: I understood the concentric nature of the photograph and the death.

H: There is nothing such as death. There is only changing places over the line I told before on that time line, that is nothing else. Because the spirit is immortal, never dies. Figure A (pointing out the photograph that we talked about, looking like himself), we come and go, understand me.

P: Very nice, that moment has been seized and this has come to you and those two moments have crashed!

H: The relationship has been accomplished. Very surprising. This is important, I mean. For example, while saying the old photograph, all of them are alive, the books are alive, the photographs are alive. We talk with them, share with them, share problems with them. We take the one and put it there, it says “I will not be sold here, we put it here, and sell it.

P: Well, then, mankind can communicate with the photographs of the people who he does not even know. Well, then who buys these photographs? Who are the people making the collections of them?

H: Painters, novel writers, collectors, the ones who are interested in. Suppose that one man collects the photographs, as the collection photograph, a thing never can be thought, passport-size-photographs. Which passport-size-photographs he collects; he collects the photographs printed on the silk card in the years of 50’s, but how will they be, their edges will be jagged. Nobody is similar to any other, all is one, due to the unique creator. An excellent collection! But only of the years of 50’s. He collects that, he enjoys with it. For example a book is published. The cover page of that book has been made with the photograph that is taken from here.

P: So a graphic artist has also bought.

H: Yes, he bought it and later signed the book.

P: That is, a very variant customer mass exists for the photograph.

H: That is, for example, this old photograph was used here.

P: For example, the man collecting the passport-size-photographs does not recognise the people in those photographs. Okay, when lined up in series, those photographs compose a very enjoying collection but not recognising those people...

H: Well, what you say, there is a customer, now he is sick, and cannot come, professor, that is a very famous professor. He, himself is single, never married. He came here, “you have very beautiful photographs, please show me the photographs of the brides and grooms belonged to the years of 30’s and 40’s” he said as in the form of the postcard. Now he has such photograph collection in his hand at least one thousand. Look what comes up. The dressing model of the bridegroom comes out, the hair-dressing model of the bridegroom comes out, accessories model comes out, the seal of the photographer comes out, the seal of the photographers comes out. For example, there is a priest in Istanbul, his name is unnecessary. He is an Orthodox priest. I know himself since my boyhood. This man collects photographs. He collects the photographs the behind of which are sealed. But he collects the Turkish photos, Anatolian photos, behind them there should be seals. What happened, the history of photography has emerged. But, look at me, I am 59 years old, closing to the 60, I know him since my boyhood, he is the same and still collects.

P: He has a 50-years archive.

H: That is, a very maniac thing, a very maniac thing! Now he is alive and vigorous than me. He comes here and “So what, where are my photographs?” I say come, let me kiss your hand and then it is. I respect him much. He is Orthodox, a priest! Wise! Wise man!

P: The people collect these, then do they exhibit them at home or how do they hold them?

H: We cannot know this, we cannot ask this. Our master has told us. If the customer does not tell his name or does not say anything, if he does not tell the telephone number, you will never and ever ask. When the customer tells, that is, that is.

P: Well, is there any special collection that you yourself compose?

H: Here, everywhere is a collection (pointing out the inside of the shop). Are you crazy, if we compose a collection we will go completely mad. They will capture us then. Absolutely! For example, we have a friend here, the books have captured him. Really they captured him. He buys, always buys but cannot sell.

P: He cannot give, because he loves his books very much, does not he?

H: His home became a storehouse. His own registered house became a storehouse. They moved from the house. The furniture remained inside they could not move them outside. They became massed. They rented a house. He now resides in a rental house. Nowadays, his shop cannot be entered. He seeks a depot about one thousand and five hundred square metres. He will fill there up too. His wife gestures as such (he makes the gesture of being fed up with). I said, look, may God delay it, but your wife will call us, and we will make the truck come close to the door, let me tell you. I said sell them, eat the money! He comes around one-o'clock. He does not collect photographs much, yes there are also photos, but in fact the books. He cannot sell, he does not sell! All his existence is dependent upon collecting everything.

P: Why do people collect?

H: Now what he says is "I cannot find these books any more". Well, what if you find them. "I love them, I cannot leave them".

P: So, he has a very strong relationship with his books.

H: What I say to you, I say they are alive, if there is not any relationship, if you do not love, would you buy anything? A relationship between you exists in such a way. Look, now, a very rare book of Rudolf Valentino. *The Love Adventures of Rudolf Valentino*. Take it. 1927. Now, if a fan of Rudolf Valentino, someone dealing with this subject and searching for the foreign cinema sees this book, it is over, over again, everything is over. There is the photograph of the man on the cover of it. His photographs in the year of 1927 are printed in this, I mean if we say from the perspective of photograph. If we say from the perspective of aesthetics, look, look at the beauty of the book, look at the composition. Very nice, it is excellent with everything. This is completely a different thing! The photographs, the books, old but this. Look, there is a book there, published in the year of 1638. Now if you go there and open the cover page of it, you will find yourself in the year of 1638. You travel in time, be careful! Now you are in the year of 1638, because the oldest book is this at this moment. It is there, look at, it stays. Keep it in your hands, go at once, why are you waiting for? Open its cover page, touch it with your hand! Now you are going to the year 1638. You are going, exactly you are gone, is there anything else! You are in the year of 1638 at this moment, in Paris. The religion philosophy in Greek and Latin. 7 volumes.

P: Where did it come from?

H: We collect these from the garbage. You will not believe it, but from the garbage.

P: I do not believe, also this one, really?

H: Yes

H: On the other hand there are times prior to the photograph, there are gravures. He also engraved like pictures. You look at it, similar to the picture.

P: The photograph of that time.

H: The photograph is new. I mean we are impressed more by gravures than photographs. But the photograph, it becomes a documentary with its whole meaning. Well, that is a document, the document and nothing else.

P: The witness of that time.

H: But if only the date or anything is written behind. I mean if it is not written, tear it up and throw away.

P: Is it really so, if there is not any historical value?

H: Well, there is not any date behind, which date? Of course we exclude it, it is excluded but it is not so, not so the way. I mean it has not the collection value.

P: Either seal or date is necessary.

H: From the seal, you find the thing of the man.

P: who he was, that is of the studio,

H: Who he was, I mean you find out who the photographer was. From the photographer, you find out that approximately on which date the photograph has been taken. Or you enter the archive, on this date, this man had a commercial activity here. There are commercial almanacs. (a telephone conversation interferes)

H: In the years of 1920's, there is an album belonged to a boy which tells his own life. He started to tell in the album since his childhood.

P: Well, that is just what I seek for.

H: He has reached up the boyhood and he has quitted.

P: What happened whom ever knows.

H: How should I know? It stands there.

P: Now is there here?

H: Yes, we have not it, not available. We have everything.

(The album is placed in the shop window. He takes it to show.)

H: He said my date of birth. My childhood years (reads the writings in the album)

P: That he wrote! This is the memory of him. What makes me most excited are these notes.

H: My childhood years. Look, how the boy is dressed up (we talk about the studio photographs in which the character in the album dressed a skirt).

H: 1923 Istanbul, 1924 Istanbul, 1926 Istanbul, 1926 Ankara, 1927 Ankara, he came to Kayseri, 28 Kayseri (the pages are turned up, and the deep-notes written under the photographs are read, as we review the photographs)

P: He grows up!

H: 29 he came to Istanbul, went to Ankara, became a soldier. 30 in Ankara. He became an officer. 31 in Ankara he stayed there it is over. That is the life of the man from 1905, 1906 suppose that he is one year old, till 31.

P: Reading the story of a person... The memorial objects put into the photograph album aside from the photograph are also interesting.

H: Oh, that belongs to the diaries. Look up, now, I had a diary. Let me show it. They are very old.

P: Ah, this is a locked diary. Such things hurt me.

H: I had a diary, if I ever could find. Well, I look up and up this girl does not seem to me foreign any more. And there the daughter of the printer. I know that man as the printer.

Three days later, the news of the woman was published in the, well, in the newspaper.

The diary came before the woman died. There is her photograph inside, and then... I cut the death announcement and placed in it.

P: That makes a memory that you added later.

H: So it is. When you enter in diaries, you enter in the private life, that does not make us interested in much. It makes me upset, for example. Here is a poem, for example, the things that you said. For example, there are the poems of Nazım Hikmet here.

P: This must be a poetry notebook.

H: Yes, look then he became a doctor, he has his picture. Şemshimah. Şems means the sun, and mah means the moon. Şemshimah means moon-faced sun or moon and sun...

P: Does not one feel a heartbreak when looked at this?

H: Well, once, we bought some properties, inside it there were a lot of things, very upsetting. The woman collected the photographs again and again, the family photographs, then things have become complex. The woman has fallen into the alcoholic places, there are also the photographs of them.

P: She has also put them in the album

H: Yes, she has also put them.

P: I mean she has not separate them

H: Yes, but a special album, and expensive. She entered into very very private. Sometimes we face such beautiful photographs, we elect them separate them.

P: It is very interesting, isn't it? I mean the photographs, the very special moments that are very special for you are exhibited in the places where everybody can see them, after they have been taken into photographs.

H: Look, now, such interesting things also occur. Listen to me ( he shows the photographs which he defined as private but did not throw away, in one photograph, a woman wearing a swimming suit has posed for by leaning against a boat. The name of the boat is "undress yourself". The other photographs are the photographs of the woman relatively dressed naughty when they were posing, there were also scenes from the daily life). (the telephone rings and the speech was intermitted).

P: Well, what are these albums? They must be new.

H: Now these albums are belonged to an agency, the albums of a film agency or a model agency, the years of 70's. Look, we selected one among these pictures suitable for us.

P: Ah, I know this girl

H: How do you know?

P: From television, is not she?

H: Sevinç Erbulak. The daughter of Altan Erbulak. Altan Erbulak is from Erzurum and I am also from Erzurum, thus I selected it. Born in 75, this is the year of 85- 90.

P: Because this is a well-known face, it has a value, of course.

H: Well, its value is that; I sent an information to her, when she comes I will give it her as a present. I mean that is its value. Now, you have gone there, given the photograph as a model, been taken and had it taken, they remained here in the archive. The day comes, the time comes, these are thrown into the garbage. These came to us from garbage!!!

Outside, inside the box, the rest of these photographs are available.

P: Do you categorize the photographs that have come according a certain system?

H: Of course, we separate the ones related to the cinema, et cetera, we throw away the others any longer, but we select the ones belonged to us of course. Come and see, let us explain in front of the outsiders now. Look, these are the photographs related to the Turkish cinema. They were hanged up those times in the places which we called as "lobby" within the cinemas. These are the ones that have come from the agency that we talked before. I do not know them but the young people all know them.

P: Ah, yes, there are a lot of them here, now the famous people.

H: For example, look at this, there was once a magazine named "Yelpaze", these are the rehearsal printings of it. Certainly these are documentaries. Look, this belongs to an old architect, he distributed his album, and this has come out from there.

P: Yes, the architectural photographs.

H: Now, for someone who makes a collection about the wooden houses, he comes and buys these from here. For example, here, these are the ones that are one million liras. These are the pictures about old Istanbul. These are two millions liras. Look, these are 250 thousand liras. Look, he has gone and enjoyed himself then there, either left or divorced, what kind of things. There are died lives here, ended lives, past lives. Traveling to the past is not only with the books but also with these.

P: Well, let me ask now for my own personal collection. Do you have any album?

H: Old album.

P: Yes, but the one containing photographs.

H: There is one there.

P: I wonder how a family pictures itself.

H: There is such an interesting thing, maybe it will be useful for you. The only wedding photographs of a family.

P: Ah, I had looked at this, last time I came here.

H: Had you looked up? Only there is this.

P: In general you always separate the photographs, don't you?

H: We do. That is we distribute the photographs, we do not keep them together. The albums are not kept. There are also empty albums.

P: You empty them and sell them separately.

H: Certainly separately, for example, someone comes and looks up, I need this, a view must be in the background, he says, especially the movie makers, the film makers. Stop now time-break. Tea time now (we have tea break)

H: Outside there are a lot of ended lives as I told you before. This is something like this.

P: Thank you very much for everything indeed.

H: If you wish to travel into time, you should come here. See, you came here and suddenly went to the year 1638. Some day you will come and see you have gone in the year 1510, once, there was a book belonged to that time. Here two and a half years ago, we sold a gravure printed in the year 1493. But before we sold it, we removed it from its frame and made everybody passing on and off touched it. Otherwise, we do not sell the goods like a concrete.

P: You experience it first, you mean

H: We handle it, enjoy it, talk to it, chat with it, okay, then we sell it.

H: Now if you enter into the history of photography, the history of photography in Istanbul, certainly there are books about them. You should certainly make an introduction to the photograph. Then the effects of the photograph on the society, the effects on the people. Now, there are such photographs that you see those men before us have lived such a happy life. You become surprised. See here outside, go out from the door, look at the window, in the window I placed a picture. Look, now, look up the dressing of the man. Today, which bridegroom is dressed in this way. I looked up my own pictures, lined up them, I said oh boy, how I was dressed up. Such an impossible thing that is. We are so imbecile according to them. A maniac thing. Look at those wedding pictures belonged to the years of 30's- 40's, see the society, they are the mirror of the society, they reflect it as similar.

P: I think there are the ones who make collections in order to organize a social research, in fact you mentioned before.

H: There are the ones who collect only the photograph of young men, or of young women, or of middle-aged women, or portrait, there are the ones who collect photographs by size. The man comes here with a ruler in his hand, measures and buys if it suits to the size. Especially there is a painter lady. She comes here once a year. There is a carton of her upside, a big carton, we bring down it. We pity her. She comes early in the morning. We give the stool under her feet, she looks and throws over it and accepts it as a canvas. She stands up, throws away there, the upside of the carton is all filled up. Then for an hour, she thinks on it. She smokes, she drinks tea. Then she changes their places. Then she turns their backsides and gives a number to them. Then she collects and takes them and goes. And there is no account, she puts some money in front of me and leaves. She leaves good money. There is no talk. No conversation has occurred between us so far. I see her. I only greet her with a head gesture. We do not have much talk. We never bother the customer. If she asks.

## APPENDIX C: Quotations in Local Language

### C1 Ülger, Fuat.

O an bir tane! Öyle bir anda geldiler akşam üzeri. Ben de bir arkadaşımı bekliyorum. “Bakabilir miyiz” dediler. “Buyrun” dedim. Fotoğrafları karıştırıyorlardı. Ben de böyle düşünüyorum, kadıncağız birden bir çılgılık attı. Korktum ben de. Bir şey mi oldu diye. Duygulandı, böyle gözleri yaşardı. Fotoğraflar, başka var mı diye bakıyor işte, bir tanesini böyle aldı sarılıyor. “Bu fotoğraf benim amcamın fotoğrafı” dedi. Gösterdi “şu” dedi. Çünkü toplu bir fotoğraf vardı. Meclisin fotoğraflarımış, amcasıymış kendisinde bile yokmuş, ailede de yokmuş fazla fotoğrafı.

### C2 Yılmazoğlu, Bahadır.

Ben bir gün dükkan sahibi olmadan önce, bundan yaklaşık 9-10 sene evvel, İstiklal Caddesinde tezgah açarken böyle bir kutu fotoğrafım vardı, onları satıyordum. Yine genç bir hanım fotoğrafları karıştırırken, kendi anneannesinin fotoğrafını buldu. Çok şaşırılmıştı. Ben de aslında çok sevinmişim yani böyle bir şeye vesile olduğu için. Oluyor bazen böyle şeyler çok nadir de olsa, çok seyrek de olsa ,oluyor yani.

### C3 Yüksel, Ahmet.

A. Şöyle bir şey oldu. Bir müzayede de bir adamın mektuplarını satıyorduk. Çocuğu geldi dedi “siz nasıl satarsınız benim annemin mektuplarını!” “Biz satırız” dedik. “Ne var, ne olmuş?” Bu dedi “benim annem” dedi. Bunun annesi yargıtayda yargılanmış demokrat parti milletvekillerinden bilmem ne Arıburun. “Sizi dava edeceğim” filan. Dedik ki “ya siz bunları kaybettiniz mi?” “Yok, kaybetmedim”. “Peki bir hırsızlık oldu mu?” “Yok.” “Peki ne yaptınız?” “Attık.” Bak atıyorsunuz ama attığınız hiç bir şey çöpe gitmez! Mahalle aralarında dolaşan hurdacılar bunları alırlar bize getirirler. Biz bunların içersinden işe yarayacak şeyleri alırız. Geri kalanı SEKA’ya gider. Sonra dedik ki bu çöpten inci bulmaya benzer, hani bir horoz çöpten inci bulmuş ya. Bunu yapan insanlar var. Dolayısıyla bazı şeyler yok olmaktan kurtarılır. Daha sonra adam ikna oldu.

P: Sonra aldı mı peki?

A: Yok yok almadı. Başkası da aldı ama.

P: Atmış o onu.

A: Sebebini de bilmiyor ki. Ben onun önemini katalogda yazıp belirtince o zaman önemli bir şey olduğunu anlıyor. Yoksa bilmiyor ki önemli mi değil mi. Bilgisi yok. Atarlar, ondan sonra da yanarlar.

P: Çöpe atılacak kadar değersiz olan bir şeyin başkası için değerli olması ilginç çok.

A: Tabi çöpte bulursun bir çoğunu. Değerini bilse satar mı ya? Satmaz. Ancak atabilir. Atınca bu toplar hurdacısıda. İşte onların içinden bir kaç kişi daha iyi bilir bunu. O işte bize yarar bu para eder diye düşünüp biza satar. Adam bundan geçiniyor. İşi bu yani. Dolayısıyla bir çok şeyi yok olmaktan kurtarıyoruz biz de bu şekilde.

### C4 Erkan, Korkut.

Genellikle bu satıcıların sattığı şeyler dünyada *unique* yani tek olan şeylerdir. Mesela geldiniz dediniz ki atıyorum ben bir kaymakamın, mülki idare memurunun yaptığı aile albümünü istiyorum. Üç kuşaktan, o da bende var. Sizin bir daha böyle bir albüm bulabilme şansınız yok. Orada fiyat ortadan kalkıyor, karşıdaki kişinin alım gücü artı satıcının isteyeceği fiyat ortaya çıkıyor. Bunda hiç bir sınır yok..



**C5 Yılmazođlu, Bahadır.**

Valla onlar tanımsız. Tanımsız yani, onlar kim oldukları belli olmayan insanlar artık.

**C6 Ülger, Fuat.**

Şu geldi ilk aklıma; maneviyatını yitirmiş sahipsiz fotoğraflar, derim yani. Çünkü maneviyatını yitirmiş olmasalar bunlar buraya kadar gelmez. Ben şahsen, bizim de aile albümlerimiz var. Albüm olarak toplu halde. Bir gün ben onların böyle düşeceğini eđer çocuklarımıza bırakamayacağım şekilde olacağını düşünürsem ben bunların hepsini ben kendim yıkarım, yakarım, atarım yani.

**C7 Bingöl, Halil.**

Eski fotoğraf derken mesela bunların hepsi canlı, kitaplar canlı fotoğraflar canlı.

**C8 Bingöl, Halil.**

Onlarla konuşuruz, paylaşıyoruz, dertleşiriz. Onu alır oraya koyarız, burda satılmıyorum der, buraya koyarız satarız. (...) Ben sana ne diyorum, canlı diyorum bunlar ya, bir ilişkisi olmasa, sen sevmesen bir şey alır mısın? Aranızda bir ilişki oluyor işte.

**C9 Hiçılmazer, Erhun.**

Sahipsiz kalan şeylerdir. Dolayısı ile bu sahipsiz kalan şeyler tekrar yaşamak gibi bir şansa erişiyorlar böylece. (...) Onların hepsi benim ailem diye tanımlarım yani. Burda biz de beraber yaşıyoruz yani.

**C10 Hiçılmazer, Erhun.**

Bunlar (fotoğraflar) bazen hüzün verici şeylerdir. Baktığınız zaman o insanları gördüğünüzde hüzünlenebilirsiniz. Bir hüzün yeridir burası zaman zaman. Geriye dönmeyi istersiniz ama belki o fotoğraftaki kişi olmayı istemezsiniz. Onun gibi olmayı istemezsiniz. Dolayısı ile buraya düşen burada olan albümün sonu hüzün doludur. Kimse o hayatın neşeli geçtiğini söyleyemez ki. (...) Sonunda buraya geldiyse bir hüzün selinden geçmiş de gelmiştir.

**C11 Şimşek, İlhan.**

Çok hüzün verici esasında bu albümlerin bu. Hatıralara bağlılık filan ne biliyim modern çağın bir şeyi ise, atıyorlar!.

**C12 Bingöl, Halil.**

Burada ölmüş hayatlar var bitmiş, sönmüş hayatlar var, geçmiş hayatlar var.

**C13 Öztürk, Celal.**

Bit pazarından yani çöpten geliyor bize. Yani şimdi, bir çöpe atılma durumu var. O işte hüzün veren kısmı. (...) yani adamın bütün geçmişi çöpe atılmış. Çok acı.

**C14 İlbey, İsmail.**

Bazı kitaplarda yeni kitaplarda bazı çekilmiş özel fotoğraflar koyuluyor. Bilirsiniz hepimiz koyarız kitabın arasına bir şeyler paralar, fotoğraflar. O fotoğraflar çıktığı anda

ben anında imha ediyorum. Yani o fotoğraflar tanınmış, hala yaşıyor olabilirler, hala tanınıyor olabilirler. Yani ortamda olmasın diye ben onları kesin yırtıyorum. Mekanı ne olursa olsun. Zaten genellikle yeni oldukları için yırtıyorum onları yani. (...) Bir değeri olsa da ben yani fotoğrafların içine koymuyorum.

**C15 Ülger, Fuat.**

Aslında acı bir şey insan üzüyor o fotoğrafların satılmasına. Herşey satılır da fotoğraf, mektup, kartpostal gibi şeyler satılır mı? Ama alıcısı var.

**C16 Yüksel, Ahmet.**

Burada bir merak duygusu yok mu? Burada birinin bir özel hayatını merak etme, adamın mahremine girme var. Kesinlikle öyle. Tabi onu herkes yapar. Gizli olan, sakınılan şey daha çok dikkat çeker.

**C17 Soydemir, Güner.**

İşte mahremiyete bakmak. Her insanın dikizleme dürtüsü vardır. Bunu sen kontrol edebilirsin hayatında. Her insanda her tür duygu var bana göre hayatta da.(...) Dikizlemedir bunlar da bir nevi, yani anahtar deliğinden çıplak bir kadını seyretmek, ya da bir kadının bir erkeği seyretmesi. Ama bir ailenin yaşantısını seyretmek de çok çekicidir. Cinsel bir objeyi görmek, çıplak bir kadını veya erkeği görmek kadar bence etkilidir.

**C18 Yüksel, Ahmet.**

Özel olmaz tabi onlar artık. Yani o kadar zaman geçince özel olmaz. O başka bir şey oluyor. O bir koleksiyon parçası oluyor. Bir micro tarihçilik oluyor. Sahipleri kalmadığı için kişiselliği, öldükleri için kişilerin kişiselliği kalmıyor.

**C19 Yılmazoğlu, Bahadır.**

Sahipleri kalmadığı için kişiselliği, öldükleri için kişilerin kişiselliği kalmıyor

**C20 Bingöl, Halil.**

Kişisel aile fotoğrafları diye biz tabi onu algılamıyoruz.

**C21 Can, Kamil.**

İki türlü adlandırabiliriz. Bir; hatıraların yok olması. İki hatıraların canlanması. Ama hatıraları yok edenler bu hatıraların sahipleri, canlandırmak isteyenler de bu işin elleri.

**C22 İlbey, İsmail.**

Bütün kişisel eşyalar içerde. İlk aldığımızda elinize bayağı acı duyuyorsunuz. Yani bir gün benim başıma da gelince diye. İlk anda diyorum ki acaba biz de öldüğümüz zaman böyle atılacak mı? Mutlaka olacaktır.

**C23 Ülger, Fuat.**

Satarken diyorum valla yarın bir gün bizim de herhalde fotoğrafları da satarlar diyorum. Düşünüyorum bazen hani kendi kendime arkadaşlarla fotoğraf çekilirken ben

çektirmiyorum aklıma hemen sattığım fotoğraflar geliyor.

**C24 Şimşek, İlhan.**

Halbuki ben, o yüzden de az fotoğraf çektiririm biliyor musunuz. Yani şimdiye kadar çok gördüğüm için böyle, pek fotoğraf çektirmedim. Çocuklarımın felan var da kendimin çok yoktur

**C25 Erkan, Korkut.**

Bir süre sonra fotoğraf ölmeye başlar. En iyi korunan kağıt bile, çok özel bir önlem almadığınız takdirde, 600 yıl sonra ölür. Dolayısı ile efemera kelimesi de buradan gelir. Gelip geçici, günlük, uçucu. Aynı gün doğan, aynı gün ölen bir böceğin ismine izafeten alınmıştır.

**C26 Şimşek, İlhan.**

Bu fotoğrafları değerli kılan da işte o izah edemediğimiz şey. Yani eski deyimle izafi. Kişiden kişiye değişir.

**C27 Özatay, M. Sahabettin.**

Oradaki hava esinti onlarla (müşterilerle) konuşuyor o anda ki, veya hissediyor onu (fotoğrafları) alıyor.

**C28 Bingöl, Halil.**

Biz öyle beton gibi satmayız malı. Elimize alırız, zevkimizi alırız, konuşuruz sohbet ederiz tamam sonra satarız onu.

**C29 Şimşek, İlhan.**

Yani o eskiye ait bir şeye dokunmak farklı birşey (...) yani bir nevi bağ kuruyorsun. Zaman makinesi gibi sizi geçmişe götürüyor.

**C30 Hiçyılmaz, Erhun.**

Bunları saklamak için alanlar ayrı bir konu, değerlendirmek için alanlar ayrı bir konudur. Belki resmi alıyor kesiyor kolaj yapıyordur belki. Orada belki idam ediyor resmi kesip bilemiyorum ki. Ya da bir tabloda yaşamaya başlıyor. Adamın gözleri mesela.